



UnitedHealth Care Imaging Accreditation Program & Cardiovascular Specialists

UnitedHealth Care (UHC) recently launched “UnitedHealth Imaging Accreditation Program,” which will require accreditation of all participating, freestanding imaging facilities and physician offices performing CT, CTA, MRI, MRA, Nuclear Medicine/Cardiology, PET, and Echocardiography. The program will take effect March 1, 2008.

The ACC believes that laboratory accreditation and/or physician certification programs developed by physicians and appropriate to the field of practice are important tools to promote and improve quality by providing independent evaluation of provider and facility performance. The ACC does not support the use of accreditation and certification strictly as cost containment mechanisms. Rather, such programs serve as one step to improve overall quality.

Through a variety of resources, cardiovascular specialists are encouraged to implement and utilize quality measurement and improvement tools. For example, the ACC provides a number of self assessment products to assist its members in continuous quality improvement activities. The Guidelines Applied in Practice (GAP) program aims to improve quality through various tools designed to bring ACC/AHS clinical practice guidelines to the point of care. In addition, the **National Cardiovascular Data Registry (NCDR™)** provides its members and interested hospitals with comparative national benchmark information and quality improvement data. The **NCDR™** includes:

- **CathPCI Registry™**, with more than 800 hospitals enrolled and more than 4.8 million patient records
- **NCDR™ ICD Registry™** (implantable cardioverter defibrillators), which collects data in ICD procedures for more than 1,400 hospitals
- **CARE Registry™** (Carotid Artery Revascularization and Endarterectomy), which supports hospital quality improvement in care of carotid disease patients. Medicare requires participation in this registry as a condition of reimbursement.
- **ACTION Registry™** (Acute Coronary Treatment and Intervention Outcomes Network), launched in January 2007 for the purpose of improving safety and outcomes for patients with Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS).

The ACC co-founded and supported the initial development of the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC), and continues involvement with IAC through representation on the various IAC boards. For ten years, the IAC has worked to develop accreditation programs for diagnostic imaging that apply appropriate and rigorous requirements on accredited facilities.

Importantly, UHC has endorsed accreditation programs developed by the IAC and the American College of Radiology (ACR). The IAC family includes the following accreditation bodies:

- Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Vascular Laboratories (ICAVL), providing accreditation for facilities performing noninvasive vascular testing; www.icavl.org
- Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Echocardiography Laboratories (ICAEL), providing accreditation for facilities performing echocardiography; www.icael.org

- Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Nuclear Medicine Laboratories (ICANL), providing accreditation for facilities performing nuclear cardiology, general nuclear medicine, and/or PET imaging; www.icanl.org
- Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Magnetic Resonance Laboratories (ICAMRL), providing accreditation for facilities performing magnetic resonance imaging; www.icamrl.org
- Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Computed Tomography Laboratories (ICACTL), to begin accrediting, fall 2007. www.icactl.org. This program will be recognized by UHC.

The College encourages a gradual implementation approach to ensure a realistic timetable for compliance which minimizes economic impact on current practitioners. Exceptions to mandates may be necessary to ensure that patients have access to care in underserved areas. ACC is discussing with UHC the possibility of adjusted deadlines. ACC will work with UHC to ensure members have all necessary information to meet the requirements for participation.

If you have any questions, please contact Mia Rosenberg, mrosenbe@acc.org or 202-375-6418.

More information about the program is available below:

[ACC Accreditation/Certification Statement](#)

[ACC/IAC Accreditation FAQs](#)

[UHC Program Press Release](#)

[IAC Program Press Release](#)

[UnitedHealth Imaging Accreditation Brochure](#)

[UHC Practice Notification letter](#)