

JCAHO

In order for a physician to provide a particular service in an accredited hospital, the Joint Commission standards require hospitals to create a mechanism for delineating clinical privileges and to assure that physicians provide services only within the scope of the specific delineated clinical privileges that have been granted to those physicians. Thus, if a physician wishes to have the right to provide the official interpretation of diagnostic radiological procedures, that individual should seek and apply for specific delineated clinical privileges to do so.

The Joint Commission defines "clinical privileges" to mean authorization granted by the governing body to a practitioner to provide specific patient care services in the hospital within defined limits, based on an individual practitioner's license, education, training, experience, competence, health status and judgment. The medical staff is responsible for the credentialing process.

A new standard added to the manual in 1996 (MS.5.4.5) is designed to prohibit economic credentialing. It states that decisions on appointments or granting of clinical privileges must consider criteria that are directly related to the quality of care. The medical staff standards acknowledge that board certification is an "excellent benchmark" when delineating clinical privileges. The medical staff must have in place a mechanism to assure that the same level of quality of patient care is provided by all individuals with delineated clinical privileges, whether within department or across departments. (MS.6.8) Further, the medical staff must have a mechanism designed to ensure that all physicians with clinical privileges provide only services within the scope of privileges actually granted to them. (MS.5.14.2)

It is very important that the hospital medical records contain an official written radiological report for each exam performed. One of the rationales for hospitals' contracting with radiologists to supervise and interpret diagnostic radiological exams has been for the purpose of assuring accuracy and completeness of records of diagnostic radiological examination. Patient care suffers if a patient's medical record does not contain a comprehensive and accurate written report of diagnostic radiological procedures.