

What is Credentialing?

Credentialing is a term that usually encompasses two separate processes: **credentialing** and **privileging**.

- **Credentialing:** Primary source verification of a health care practitioner's education, training, work experience, license, etc.
- **Privileging:** Granting approval for an individual to perform a specific procedure or specific set of procedures based on competence in the specialty in which privileges are requested.
- **Insurance Payor Credentialing:** The credentialing process also involves insurance credentialing and obtaining Riverwood Healthcare Center (RHCC) billing numbers for each medical staff provider, based on specialty.

Who is Credentialed?

Practitioners who are independently responsible for patient care at RHCC by virtue of their license and hospital authority must be credentialed (regardless of whether they are RHCC employees or not). Credentialed providers at RHCC include:

- Physicians
- Dentists
- Podiatrists
- Optometrists
- Advanced Practice Providers
- Psychologists
- Acupuncturists
- Pharmacists doing Medication Therapy Management

Why does RHCC Credential?

RHCC, like other health care organizations, is legally responsible for knowing that individuals providing patient care are qualified and competent to do so. The Joint Commission, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Minnesota Department of Health and Human Services and other oversight organizations require that members of the medical and allied health staff be credentialed and privileged before working in the facility.

Can a physician or other practitioner work before completing the credentialing process?

No. It is RHCC's legal obligation to ensure that all practitioners have gone through the credentialing process and have been approved by the Governing Board to work at RHCC. A practitioner working at RHCC before the credentialing process is complete places the hospital and the practitioner at legal risk and can directly impact RHCC's accreditation status.

What is Primary Source Verification (PSV)?

- PSV is the process of verifying credentials directly with the source. For example, a credentialing office cannot accept a copy of a medical school degree as evidence that the physician graduated from medical school. The school must be contacted directly to verify the physician's attendance and graduation.
- PSV is required so that hospitals and credentialing offices do not receive fraudulent documents from applicants or other non-primary sources.
- A credentialing office cannot accept any verification that comes through a third party rather than the primary source.
- PSV is a requirement by accrediting bodies as well as the cornerstone of a good credentialing process.

What is The Joint Commission?

- The Joint Commission is an accrediting organization with a mission to improve the safety and quality of care provided to the public.
- Hospitals voluntarily submit to The Joint Commission accreditation surveys every three years; the survey is a comprehensive evaluation of the overall quality and safety of the organization.
- RHCC Provider Credentialing Services complies with all of The Joint Commission credentialing standards.

How far in advance of my start date should I begin the credentialing process?

Most health care organizations advise submitting an application 90 days before a practitioner's start date. Ninety days is a benchmark because it allows extra time when verification sources do not respond in a timely manner or clarification of discrepancies is required.

How long does it take for a practitioner's application to go through the credentialing process?

- The Credentialing process consists of two steps:
 - Verification and evaluation processes performed by RHCC and Lake Superior Credentialing Verification Services; and
 - Review and approval of the verified application by the RHCC Credentialing Committee, Medical Executive Committee and the RHCC Governing Board of Directors
- Offices that perform primary source verification of credentialing applications have very little control over process time. The process time is affected by outside verification sources (other hospitals, training programs, peer references, employers, etc.) responding to requests for information.
- An application can be completed in less time if peer references and other verification sources promptly respond to RHCC's requests for information, requested documentation is supplied by the applicant in a timely fashion and there are no red flags identified in the application process which require further investigation.
- The verification process can be completed in less time if all sources respond to first requests for information. If a response is not received, credentialing staff execute additional requests to sources; this causes a significant time delay in completing applications.