overestimated, it is still a real threat, as are other bloodborne viruses for which no vaccine is available.

On these grounds, we find it wise to adopt these changes in surgical technique and choreography, especially for the coming generations of surgeons. These measures will reduce the risk of occupational acquisition of HIV and other bloodborne pathogens, especially hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C virus, which are of greater risk to the surgeon.

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Joint Commission's Blue Ribbon Panel to Evaluate Performance Measurement Systems

Gina Pugliese, RN, MS
Martin S. Favero, PhD
Medical News Editors

The Joint Commission Board of Commissioners recently approved the Council on Performance Measurement's recommendation to evaluate the more than 140 candidate performance measurement systems that have been submitted in consideration for potential use in the future accreditation process. This is part of an overall plan to integrate data from multiple qualified performance measurement systems into the accreditation process to assure the element of choice for each organization.

The Joint Commission believes that the use of performance data in accreditation will enhance the value of the accreditation process by providing objective data to support internal quality improvement activities; permit healthcare organizations the opportunity to demonstrate accountability to their patients, communities, and purchasers of health care; and provide the Joint Commission the means to link standards compliance with the measurement of actual performance.

The Joint Commission has developed progressive implementation requirements for six specific criteria that will require either immediate compliance in 1996 or in the future, before final approval of the measurement system. Measurement systems meeting the 1996 criteria will be recommended for initial approval and will be invited to work with the Joint Commission toward satisfying the identified future criteria. The six criteria are (1) performance measures and data elements; (2) database; (3) data quality; (4) risk adjustment/stratification for patient factors; (5) performance measure-related feedback; and (6) relevance for accreditation. Public comment is invited. A copy of the full-text document containing additional details is available by calling the Joint Commission's Department of Research and Evaluation at 708-916-5971.

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