



ACCREDITATION
CANADA

Better Quality. Better Health.

Share your accreditation story

Communications kit



About Accreditation Canada

Accreditation Canada is an independent, not-for-profit organization that accredits health care and social services organizations in Canada and around the world. Its comprehensive accreditation programs foster ongoing quality improvement through evidence-based standards and a rigorous external peer review. Accredited by the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua), Accreditation Canada has been helping organizations improve health care quality and patient safety for more than 55 years.

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CANADA

1150 Cyrville Road, Ottawa, Ontario K1J 7S9
613-738-3800 • 1-800-814-7769
accreditation.ca

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Parenteses () in this kit indicate where you add information, and brackets [] indicate where you insert a hyperlink.

Your quality improvement journey

Accreditation is an ongoing process of evaluating and recognizing a program or service as meeting established standards. It is just one of many tools in your quality toolbox, and should be integrated in your organization's quality improvement strategy.

Participating in accreditation demonstrates that you're striving to achieve excellent quality and safety at your organization. This *Communications kit* contains resources to help you engage staff and your community in your quality journey. An organization that takes the time and makes the effort to properly engage its internal and external communities in accreditation will achieve better care for its clients, and build stronger teams.

The content in this *Communications kit* is a reflection of the great work already being done by many organizations across the country to demonstrate their commitment to quality through accreditation. We hope you are able to use it, enhance it—and even better, share it—so all Canadians achieve better quality for better health.

Share your story

You're participating in accreditation, and that's a story worth sharing!

If you're looking for ways to promote your story, this *Communications kit* is designed to help you. It contains resources to celebrate your accreditation journey with various audiences.

Your accreditation journey is about moving your organization toward the highest standards in quality care. You can use that story to connect with important audiences, including patients/clients, families, the board of directors, the local community, and the media, so they understand how hard your organization is working to provide safe, high-quality health care services. You can also reach out to staff and physicians to make sure they understand the impact their hard work has on your organization.

Take time to tell people what an amazing job your organization is doing, and how accreditation is helping to support the delivery of quality services.

What should you share?

To begin, explain accreditation. Not everyone will know about or fully understand the accreditation process. Below we have included *Accreditation basics* and some additional points that you can use to help explain the process.

Think about the different audiences you want to reach, and how you might explain accreditation to each one. The public and the media, for example, will likely require more background information than health care professionals. Think of where and how you could share this information and add those ideas to your list of communication tools.

Accreditation basics

What is health care accreditation?

- Health care accreditation through our Qmentum program is an ongoing process of assessing health care and social services organizations against standards of excellence to identify what is being done well and what needs to be improved.

What is the value of accreditation?

- Accreditation helps health care organizations improve quality and safety by shining a light on processes that work well, and those that need more attention. The result? Reduced risk and higher quality care.
- Accreditation creates stronger teams by improving communication and collaboration, and promoting learning around Leading Practices. The result? More effective teams and better care outcomes.
- Accreditation demonstrates your commitment to quality, safety, and accountability. The result? Greater public confidence in your organization.

What is Accreditation Canada?

- We're an independent, not-for-profit, 100% Canadian organization. We have been Canada's trusted accreditor for more than 55 years.
- We're here because Canadians expect high-quality health care and want to feel that health systems—from the largest to the smallest and everything in between—offer safe, high-quality health care.

- The organizations we accredit work hard to meet our standards. They do this because quality health care matters.

How does the Accreditation Canada program work?

Start your journey

- An organization begins the accreditation process by assessing itself against Accreditation Canada standards.
- Our standards examine an organization's governance, leadership, risk management, infection prevention and control, and medication management measures, as well as the quality of care in those care areas provided by the organization (e.g., home care, rehabilitation, acute care, long-term care, community and public health, mental health and addictions treatment, labs, and blood banks).
- An organization uses the self-assessment and the standards to identify areas that need work, and to plan quality improvement activities for the coming months.

On-site survey

- An on-site survey is conducted by trained peer surveyors who assess the organization against national standards. The surveyors are health care professionals and administrators from accredited health care organizations.
- After the on-site survey, the surveyors submit a preliminary report to the health care organization and to Accreditation Canada.
- Accreditation Canada examines the surveyors' report and provides the organization with a final report and an accreditation decision based on the on-site survey. The accreditation decision lasts for four years.

Ongoing quality journey

- The results of the on-site survey point to areas of success and areas where improvements can be made; the latter are used to bolster the organization's ongoing quality improvement program.
- The organization continues on its quality improvement journey, which is an iterative cycle.

General key messages

Here are some key messages about accreditation that you can use in your communication materials:

- Accreditation is a quality improvement process; it helps our organization identify what we're doing well and where we need to focus our improvement efforts.
- Accreditation is a journey—a continuous process; there is always room for improvement.
- Our organization is committed to quality and safety in health care delivery.
- The safety of patients and health care providers is of the utmost importance to our organization.
- Quality improvement is in our DNA; it's integrated into our everyday practices.
- The focus of accreditation is on the processes used to deliver care, not on individual health care providers.
- The whole organization is involved in accreditation, from front-line staff and volunteers to board members, patients, and families.
- Accreditation touches our entire organization, not simply a few programs within our organization.
- Our organization complies with Required Organizational Practices, which address high-risk areas in health care.
- We take part in ongoing self-assessments to identify where we should focus our improvements.

Accurately describing your accreditation decision

Whether you are participating in the Accreditation Primer, Qmentum, or Distinction programs, we encourage you to share your accreditation achievements with your community. It is important that you accurately describe the process, the on-site survey, and your accreditation decision.

It's easy to overstate or inaccurately describe what being accredited means. For instance, it would be accurate to say that you participate in accreditation to improve the quality of services you provide, but it wouldn't be accurate to say that doing so is a guarantee that you provide quality services.

Here are some tips that may help you avoid the pitfalls associated with communicating about accreditation.

- Accreditation is not a guarantee of any kind. It does not ensure quality care; rather, it is an assurance that an organization is taking steps to continually improve the quality of its services.
- Be precise when stating your Qmentum accreditation decision:
 - Accredited
 - Accredited with Commendation
 - Accredited with Exemplary Standing
- If you are taking part in the Accreditation Primer or Distinction programs, be sure to refer to your Accreditation Primer Award or your Award of Distinction.
- Along your organization's quality journey, you should profile and celebrate its successes. Focus on your own journey, and avoid comparisons with other organizations.
- When promoting your award, avoid using the percentage of criteria met. While it is positive news, high levels of compliance with criteria do not reflect the complexity of the organization or provide a complete picture of quality at an organization. For example, an organization may have 97% compliance with criteria, but may have failed to comply with a Required Organizational Practice.
- If you have questions about any aspect of presenting your story, contact communications@accreditation.ca.

Communicating a change in your decision level

What do you do when your decision level changes? How do you communicate this information to the public, the media, and your own organization?

We know your on-site survey performance is important to you, but try not to place undue emphasis on your accreditation decision. Accreditation is meant to improve the care you provide to your clients, and it should remain your point of focus. That said, we recognize that communicating a change in your decision level can feel like a challenge.

Remember, it's important to stay positive and recognize the hard work that goes on at your organization.

When participating in the accreditation process, first and foremost, make sure your staff members know that their work in quality and safety is appreciated. Confirm with the public and the media that your participation in accreditation demonstrates a commitment to continuously improving the care you provide. A change in your decision level does not necessarily mean your organization's quality and safety is better or worse. Rather, it means that as a result of our raising the bar, there are new opportunities to improve the care you provide.

We make changes to our program each year to help organizations across Canada stretch and grow, as quality improvement is an ongoing process. There is always room to improve! This means our program pushes organizations to forge ahead and remain at the forefront of change and innovation in health care quality and safety.

We encourage you to consider accreditation a continuous journey for the benefit of the clients you serve. We do not expect that all organizations will achieve *Accreditation with Exemplary Standing* or *Accreditation with Commendation* at every survey.

Create a list of communication tools

Start by listing the communication tools you will use to tell different audiences about accreditation. This list will help you identify any gaps and make it simple to show others how you're going to communicate accreditation messages in the coming year.

Here's an example of what your chart might look like (modified with permission from Humber River Hospital, Toronto, ON).

Not all of these suggestions may be suitable in your organization, but they are a good starting point. If it's helpful, break the chart down further by adding categories like "For managers," "Mock tracers," "Self-Assessment," etc.

Accreditation communication tools

| Tool | Target audience | Details | Date of issue | Person responsible | Status (e.g., planned, in progress, completed) |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---------------|--------------------|--|
| Newsletter articles | Staff, physicians, volunteers | Monthly? Weekly? Address accreditation questions; invite staff/physicians to submit questions. Format for email or hard copy distribution. | | | |
| Report to the board | Board, leadership | Quarterly? Yearly? High-level report with statistics about what has been done to keep various audiences informed. | | | |
| Posters | Staff, physicians, volunteers, patients, families | Various topics, including Required Organizational Practices, mock tracers, and the on-site survey. | | | |
| Factsheets | Staff, physicians, volunteers | Monthly? Key information linked to relevant policies and procedures, and formatted for distribution to staff or posting on walls. | | | |
| Sample on-site survey questions | Staff, physicians, volunteers, patients, families | A Q&A with samples of the types of questions surveyors might ask when conducting an on-site survey. | | | |

| Tool | Target audience | Details | Date of issue | Person responsible | Status (e.g., planned, in progress, completed) |
|--|---|---|---------------|--------------------|--|
| Intranet site | Staff, physicians, volunteers | Explain accreditation basics; create a step-by-step time line of what will happen during the accreditation process. Post regular updates about successes and challenges. Create customized pages that allow for staff collaboration. Include a countdown to the on-site survey. | | | |
| Internal accreditation emails | Staff, physicians, volunteers | Weekly? Monthly? A brief email with accreditation facts. | | | |
| Slide presentations | Staff, physicians, volunteers | Standardized presentations on select topics, such as Required Organizational Practices, for use during staff meetings. | | | |
| Website | The public | Discuss accreditation and why your organization is pursuing it; post an article and any related news releases. | | | |
| Social media | The public, staff, physicians, volunteers, colleagues | Establish a Twitter and/or Facebook presence; mention key milestones along the accreditation journey. | | | |
| Checklist for managers | Managers | Create a checklist of what they need to have in place, based on the standards. | | | |
| On-site survey schedule | Staff, physicians, volunteers | Post on the intranet so everyone knows what will take place and when. | | | |
| Team-/unit-/department-specific key messages documents | Staff, physicians | Create a document for each team outlining what staff need to know about their department (e.g., overview, goals/objectives, accomplishments). | | | |

How can you share your story?



Website

Your website is an excellent way to reach a large number of people at a very low cost. Many organizations have established an accreditation section on their corporate website. This might include the items listed below.

A message from the CEO/Executive Director/Administrator helps set the tone for accreditation at the organization.

Example

(Insert name of organization) is committed to continually improving our services. That's why we voluntarily participate in accreditation with Accreditation Canada—to learn what we're doing well and where we can improve.

By having external surveyors assess our services against national standards, we are better able to focus our quality improvement efforts.

Everyone at (insert name of organization) is involved in accreditation, from front-line staff and volunteers to board members. That's because we are committed to quality and patient safety.

[*Accreditation basics*] provides you with further information, but if you have questions about accreditation, please contact (insert name and contact information).

Note: In the example above, we refer to *Accreditation basics*. Use the section with that name in this *Communications kit* to create your own *Accreditation basics* document, web page, or email text.

An introduction to accreditation can help the public understand accreditation and why it's important. You might include the *Accreditation basics* on your website as well as the key messages we provide in this kit.

Examples

How Hamilton Health Sciences explains its participation in accreditation on its website:

Accreditation

Hamilton Health Sciences is committed to quality of care and service. Participation in the accreditation process is a key action by which we measure our clinical and operational performance against established health care provider standards. It enables us to identify opportunities to improve patient care and service in a way that is transparent and holds us accountable to our communities.

Accreditation Canada's accreditation program—developed over 55 years—has a high degree of recognition in the international health care community.

The Accreditation Canada approach has evolved into an ongoing, interactive, 48-month Qmentum cycle that aligns well with our philosophy of continuous quality improvement.

In February 2012, Hamilton Health Sciences received Accreditation with Exemplary Standing from Accreditation Canada (see our *[Accreditation Report]*). This is the highest ranking conferred by Accreditation Canada under a new rating system it instituted on January 1, 2012.

How Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) explains its participation in accreditation on its website:

Passion for Quality: Accreditation

Accreditation is an internationally recognized evaluation system that VIHA uses to make sure we continue to meet evolving care standards and provide the highest level of quality care possible. Being accredited means that we have been assessed by the third-party organization, Accreditation Canada, and have proven ourselves to be meeting or exceeding current health care standards.

The accreditation process involves visits from health care professionals representing Accreditation Canada, who speak with staff, volunteers, patients, and families to gain a better understanding of our care practices.

A news section should contain your media releases; you may also choose to post any coverage you receive from media outlets.

A results section could include examples of how the accreditation process prompted your organization to make changes that had a positive impact on patients/clients/staff.

Example

An article you might post on your website:

We've been working within the accreditation process to improve the quality and safety of care at our organization. We recently had a positive change as a result of this process and thought we'd share our success with you!

After joining the Qmentum program, we adjusted several processes to fulfill criteria in the Accreditation Canada *Infection Prevention and Control Standards*. In doing so, we quickly learned that although volunteers were encouraged to wash their hands and use hand sanitizers, they did not have thorough hand hygiene training as part of their volunteer orientation. We were able to amend this situation, so all our volunteers now have a complete orientation on hand hygiene. This means they are better able to help prevent the spread of infections at our organization.

We are proud of the ways in which we are making our organization safer for patients, their families, and staff members. This is just one example of how we're focusing on quality improvement to keep you safe. We welcome your questions and comments about accreditation. You can send them to (insert name and contact info for Accreditation Coordinator).

Introduction to the Accreditation Coordinator

Example

(Include a photo, if possible)

Hi there! I'm (insert name) and I'm the Accreditation Coordinator at (insert name of organization). I'm encouraging everyone to get involved in our accreditation process.

If you have questions or would like to know how to get involved, please contact me at [email address]. Whether you're a staff member, physician, patient, or the family member of a patient, know that I'm here to connect with you if you have questions or comments about accreditation and how it affects you.

The Accreditation Report provided by Accreditation Canada after your on-site survey can be used to be transparent about your accreditation journey. It includes a new Executive Summary that was developed to help you spread the word about your accreditation activities in a succinct, public-friendly way. As an overview of the entire *Accreditation Report*, the Executive Summary is a great addition to your website.

Example

How to profile your Accreditation Report:

Accreditation Canada recently conducted an on-site survey of our organization and we were (insert accreditation decision).

We are very proud of everyone who works here and their commitment to quality improvement. The on-site survey was an excellent learning experience and highlighted the ways in which we can make our services better.

In an effort to be transparent about our quality improvement processes, we are making our [Accreditation Report] available. It highlights our successes and opportunities for improvement. If you have any questions about this report, please contact (insert name and contact information).

A change in decision level

Example

We recently underwent an on-site survey by peer reviewers from Accreditation Canada. They shared their expertise, evaluated the extent to which we meet national standards of excellence, and made recommendations. The standards focused on topics that included governance, leadership, infection prevention and control, medication management, and a number of clinical services. At the end of their process, we were rewarded with a decision of *Accredited*. We are proud of the work our dedicated staff members and employees put into achieving this decision and into maintaining safe, high-quality health care services. Being accredited is a significant achievement, and we're fully engaged in what the accreditation process offers – the opportunity to continually improve the delivery of safe, quality care.

As an organization, we step up to the plate to participate in Accreditation Canada's accreditation program. Year after year, changes to the program—based on the ongoing development of best practices—challenges us to continually evaluate how we work. The on-site survey provides a means of identifying gaps so we can create a plan to address them. All of this ensures that our clients are safe in our care.

We're proud of the key achievements noted during our on-site survey, including:

[Name two or three key achievements here. You may want to cite some of the comments surveyors made during your debriefing sessions or in your *Accreditation Report*. Focusing on what they say is a more interesting story than providing data alone. **[Note:** Please do not include surveyors' names. Quotes can be attributed to "the Accreditation Canada surveyor team."]

We have already begun to address the areas identified as requiring further attention. We want to close the gap, so the next time we're surveyed we can confirm that our efforts have improved our services. We are grateful to our staff and employees for their commitment to working on quality improvement. We're going to continue to be vigilant with respect to quality and safety, and welcome your participation in our efforts!



Intranet

Your intranet provides an excellent way to communicate with staff and physicians. You can make tools and resources available to them throughout the accreditation process. These tools might include:

- A message from the CEO
- *Accreditation basics*
- A timeline of accreditation activities
- Contact information for the Accreditation Coordinator
- A library of all-staff emails about accreditation that have been sent out
- Mock on-site survey activities
- Links to documents that staff may need to access during the on-site survey (e.g., vision, mission, strategic plan)
- A mini-quiz with the types of questions surveyors might ask while conducting the on-site survey
- Articles for staff and physicians

Examples

How to write an article for an internal e-newsletter:

Hello team! (Insert name of organization) voluntarily participates in the Accreditation Canada program. We do this to identify what we are doing well and what we can do better.

Over the next year, you will see articles about accreditation in this newsletter. They will explain some of the basic principles of accreditation, as well as your role in the process.

To start us off, take a look at [*Accreditation basics*]; it provides an overview of the accreditation process.

Please contact us if you have questions about accreditation; we will answer them and we may even include them in an all-staff newsletter. We will also provide you with tips at different stages of the accreditation process (e.g., self-assessment, on-site survey, post-survey). If you have questions about accreditation, please contact (insert name and contact information).

We look forward to working together on our quality improvement journey!

What you might write to congratulate staff on an accreditation decision:

Congratulations—we did it! With your help and dedication, we earned (insert accreditation decision) from Accreditation Canada during our recent on-site survey. This award is the result of our collective commitment to providing our patients with safe, high-quality care.

Your hard work has paid off, and improvements to processes in our organization are real success stories. For example (insert a line or two about a change that was made that resulted in better care, improved efficiency, or improved safety).

Let's keep up the good work. As you know, quality improvement is something we need to think about every day and not just during our accreditation survey! Quality improvement can help make our lives easier by making our work processes more efficient.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact (insert name and contact information of the Accreditation Coordinator).

What you might write to staff to communicate a change in decision level:

Hello team! As you know, we recently welcomed surveyors from Accreditation Canada to our organization for an on-site survey as part of the accreditation process. You have all been involved in our quality improvement efforts, and some of you spoke to surveyors as they evaluated the extent to which we meet national standards of excellence. At the end of the on-site survey, we were rewarded with a decision of *Accredited*.

Being accredited is a significant achievement! We are very proud of the work that you have put into achieving this decision and into maintaining safe, high-quality health care services for our patients. Year after year, changes to the accreditation program require a shift in how we work. The on-site survey is a way of validating our achievements, and also of identifying areas requiring improvement so we can create a plan to address these gaps and continually improve as an organization.

We want to thank each and every one of you for your ongoing commitment to providing safe and quality care to our patients, day in and day out. We are proud of the work you do and you should be too. We'll continue our quality improvement work, and encourage you to continue to participate in our efforts!



Social media

Social media is a cost-effective way of sharing your accreditation story with patients and the media. It also allows you to build your brand, increase your visibility, and create a community in a friendly and informal way. Accreditation Canada is on Twitter (@AccredCanada), and we will gladly retweet your good news so it is shared even more broadly.

Examples

Twitter

Quality health care matters! That's why we're participating in @AccredCanada's accreditation program. Learn more: [insert link to webpage on accreditation or Accreditation Canada website].

We're committed to quality and safety in health care delivery. Learn about our accreditation process with @AccredCanada: [Insert link to webpage on accreditation or Accreditation Canada website].

We're taking part in the @AccredCanada program because we care about the safety of our patients. Find out how: [insert link to webpage on accreditation or Accreditation Canada website].

We've achieved (insert accreditation decision) from @AccredCanada! Congratulations to staff—you're amazing. [Insert link to news release or Accreditation Canada website]

We are now (insert accreditation decision)! Find out how we're improving quality and safety with @AccredCanada. [Insert link to news release or Accreditation Canada website]

We've earned (insert accreditation decision) from @AccredCanada! Learn how we did it: [Insert link to news release or Accreditation Canada website].

Facebook

We know that our patients and their families expect high-quality and safe health care. So we've decided to participate in Accreditation Canada's accreditation program to improve the quality and safety of the services we deliver. Learn more about our accreditation process: [insert link to webpage on accreditation].

Quality health care matters to us, and that's why we are taking part in Accreditation Canada's accreditation program. We've been working hard to meet the requirements of their program, and we're already seeing improvements in the delivery of safe, high-quality care! Learn how it will help us continue to improve health care services for our patients: [Insert link to webpage on accreditation].

We value the safety of our patients. Learn more about how we're working with Accreditation Canada and using accreditation to improve the quality and safety of our services: [Insert link to webpage on accreditation].

We did it! We're officially (insert accreditation decision). We recently underwent an on-site survey by Accreditation Canada to assess quality and safety at our organization. [Insert link to news release or Accreditation Canada website] The results tell us more about what we're doing well and what we can do better. Learn more about how we're using accreditation to drive quality and safety in our services: [Insert link to *Accreditation Report* on your website].

We're (insert accreditation decision) by Accreditation Canada! [Insert link to Accreditation Canada website] We work hard to provide our patients with high-quality services every day. Our voluntary assessment by Accreditation Canada is part of our commitment to improving health care services. Learn more about how we're using the Accreditation Canada program to continually improve the quality and safety of our services: [Insert link to *Accreditation Report* on your website].

(Insert accreditation decision)! That's our new status, awarded to us by Accreditation Canada, the organization that recently evaluated the quality and safety of our services [Insert link to Accreditation Canada website]. Learn more about the accreditation process and how it will help us continue to improve health care services for you: [insert link to *Accreditation Report* on your website].



Emails

You can also send out regular emails to staff and physicians that offer snippets of information about accreditation. You could create a table outlining the emails you will send out throughout the year.

Example

For the first quarter, with some sample emails:

| Date of email | Topic |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 st week of January | What is accreditation? |
| 3 rd week of January | <p>What is your role in accreditation?</p> <p>Dear team,</p> <p>As you know, we recently joined the Accreditation Canada Qmentum program. Your role in this process may not be clear to you right now, so I'm writing to let you know that there are three simple ways to get involved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Learn about accreditation and attend organization-wide events related to accreditation. During your learning process, you can contact me at (insert email address or phone number) if you have comments, questions, or feedback.2. Become part of a team working on interventions designed to improve quality and safety in our organization.3. Be open to change. Support accreditation teams by helping them implement new measures and track indicators to see if their interventions are working as intended. <p>As we move further into the accreditation process, your role will become more obvious. For example, you may be asked to participate on an accreditation team, or you may need to support that team's interventions. If you have questions at any point, you can connect with me at (insert contact information).</p> <p>Yours in the accreditation journey, (Insert name)</p> |

| Date of email | Topic |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1 st week of February | What are ROPs? |
| 3 rd week of February | <p data-bbox="561 285 1130 321">What is measurement for improvement?</p> <p data-bbox="561 348 678 384">Hi team,</p> <p data-bbox="561 411 1446 621">Sometimes we struggle to use indicators effectively in our everyday work. This is why Accreditation Canada included a process in its standards called “measurement for improvement (MFI).” This process helps us use indicators to deliver better quality care and safer services.</p> <p data-bbox="561 648 1422 858">MFI standards explain how to collect and use indicator data to guide quality improvement initiatives at the team level. This process will help us identify, design, plan, and evaluate initiatives, so we can provide quality and safe services for our clients.</p> <p data-bbox="561 886 1468 1054">We have always strived to improve our services. MFI simply helps us do so using data to be sure we’re on track and on target. If you have questions about MFI, please get in touch with me at [email address].</p> <p data-bbox="561 1081 1040 1161">Yours in the accreditation journey, (Insert name)</p> |
| 1 st week of March | How does the self-assessment process work? |
| 3 rd week of March | What is patient safety training? |

If you have questions about accreditation while you’re writing these emails, contact your Accreditation Specialist for information, or consult your client organization portal.



Articles

Target patients and the public by writing an article explaining accreditation and how it is improving your organization; publish it in your annual report, your fundraising vehicles, or share it with your community newspaper.



Staff forums

Consider having members of your executive/leadership team meet with staff to discuss the accreditation process and what you hope to achieve organizationally. An internal presentation followed by a Q&A session can build excitement, engagement, and momentum in the accreditation process. Focus on successes and challenges and your commitment to improving service provision through accreditation. Consider handing out *Accreditation basics*.

You should also consider making presentations to your board (if applicable), so it is kept up-to-date with the accreditation process and its effect on staff, programs and services, and patients/clients.

Take the opportunity to celebrate key milestones in the accreditation process and generate excitement among staff. This is a process in which all staff have a role and a great chance to work toward a common goal.



Media events

Media events are an excellent way to gain attention for your organization.

The media will likely be more interested in your accreditation journey before and after the actual on-site survey. You may be able to take advantage of this by having regular meetings between local media and members of your executive/leadership team to discuss what your organization is doing to improve quality and safety through accreditation.

You could also consider inviting the media to the surveyors' staff debriefing. This allows reporters to hear information about the survey first hand, and gives them an opportunity to follow up directly with your organization's leadership.



Media releases

Share your organization's good news via a media release. The following are samples of media releases, not templates. We are offering them for consideration, and are happy to work with you to craft one that meets your needs.

Examples

For immediate release

We did it! We are accredited!

(Date – City, Province) (Insert name of organization) is proud to announce that it has successfully achieved accreditation with Accreditation Canada. The decision followed its first on-site survey in February 2015 as part of an ongoing accreditation process.

Health care accreditation helps identify what an organization is doing well and where to focus its improvement efforts. (Insert name of organization) was evaluated against national standards, and will use the results to improve the quality and safety of its services.

"I am very proud of everyone at (insert name of organization)," said (insert name), President and CEO. "They work incredibly hard to make sure they provide our community with health care services that are safe, effective, and of the highest quality. Our accreditation award is a real testament to the fact that everyone here makes quality and safety a priority every day."

Accreditation Canada clients work hard to continually improve the quality of their services because quality health care matters!

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(Boilerplate)

For more information, contact: (insert name of media contact)

For immediate release

Accredited for the first time!

(Date – City, Province) (Insert name of organization) was recently accredited as a result of a thorough assessment of its services by surveyors from Accreditation Canada. The survey team spent (insert number) days at our long-term care home, evaluating it against national standards. (Insert name of organization) voluntarily participates in the accreditation process to improve the quality of the services provided to residents.

“Quality and safety are extremely important to everyone who works here,” said (insert name), (insert title) of (insert name of organization). “These results demonstrate our commitment to quality initiatives that make our residents safer.”

Accreditation involves assessing processes that (insert name of organization) has in place, to ensure that we are providing the best quality of care and services to our residents.

There are a number of components to accreditation against which we measure our quality efforts, including standards and Required Organizational Practices. These were assessed when the surveyors met with staff, residents, and their families at (insert name of organization).

“We participate in accreditation because we believe that quality and safety matter to our residents and their families,” added (insert name), Quality Manager at (insert name of organization). We believe that improving the quality of our care is a continuous journey—a journey to which we are fully committed.”

Accreditation Canada has been helping organizations improve their quality and safety for over 55 years. (Insert name of organization) will continue to work with Accreditation Canada on its quality journey.

- 30 -

(Boilerplate)

For more information, contact: (insert name of media contact)

A media release that communicates a change in your decision level:

Example

For immediate release

Proud to be accredited!

(Date – City, Province) (Insert name of organization) is pleased to announce that it was awarded with a decision of *Accredited* following a thorough assessment of its services by surveyors from Accreditation Canada.

Health care accreditation helps identify what an organization is doing well and where to focus its improvements efforts. This recent assessment was (insert name of organization)'s (insert number) on-site survey as part of its participation in the accreditation process with Accreditation Canada.

"I am extremely proud of all the staff at (insert name of organization)," said (insert name), President and CEO. "Accreditation challenges us to meet national standards of excellence, and to continually improve the quality and safety of our services for patients and families."

Over the next few months, (insert name of organization) will be working hard to address the recommendations made by the accreditation surveyors because quality health care matters.

- 30 -

(Boilerplate)

For more information, contact: (insert name of media contact)

How to write a media release

Writing a media release may seem challenging if you do not have a communications team at your disposal, so we've provided a list of tips and content suggestions for creating a media release to celebrate your accreditation achievement.

Paragraph one:

- Bold and centre the title
- Begin with: (date – city, province)
- Write about the accreditation level your organization achieved
- Include a brief explanation of accreditation and what it involves
- Mention why accreditation is important to your organization

Paragraph two:

- Give an example or two of how accreditation is shaping processes at your organization. Have you implemented new processes as a result of the self-assessment, or the on-site survey? Have there been noticeable improvements as a result of accreditation?

Paragraph three:

- Include a congratulatory quote or message from your CEO/Executive Director/Administrator
- If you would like to also include a quote from Accreditation Canada, please contact communications@accreditation.ca.

Closing:

- Close the media release with “- 30 -” at the end, as illustrated in the media release examples
- Your organization's boilerplate
- Provide contact information for someone at your organization who can provide more information. Include the following:
 - Name
 - Job title
 - Email
 - Phone number



Promotional items

When you receive an accreditation decision after your on-site survey, it is important to promote your achievement. Be proud of what your organization has accomplished! The following items can help publicize your success.

Accreditation Seal

Use the Accreditation Seal to show that your organization is accredited with Accreditation Canada. The seal includes the accreditation decision your organization received. Accredited organizations may use the seal on their website, in advertisements, or in print materials such as letterhead, fund-raising materials, and brochures for patients/clients.

You will receive several digital formats of the seal; contact your Accreditation Specialist if you have questions about using it.

Certificates

Your organization's corporate head office receives one complimentary certificate, so be sure to display it in a prominent location, such as the lobby or near the main elevators. It's an accomplishment to be proud of!

Banners

Your organization's participating sites each receive a complimentary banner, if desired. Banners can be displayed inside or outside.

Panels

Your organization's participating sites each receive a complimentary vinyl panel, if desired. Panels are for inside use and are to be applied to flat, clear surfaces like glass doors or windows.

If you wish to order additional certificates, banners, or panels, please contact your Accreditation Specialist.

A story worth sharing

We hope this *Communications kit* will help you share and promote your accreditation story with many audiences.

Accreditation Canada works with a variety of organizations—from large provincial health authorities to walk-in clinics and community health programs—to improve health care quality through accreditation. As a result, you'll need to decide what information from this *Communications kit* is appropriate for your organization and tailor it accordingly.

Please contact us if you would like your good news communicated to a broader audience. We will be happy to discuss how we can share your successes through our communication channels.

We also encourage you to share the strategies and tools you are using to promote accreditation within your own organization with us so we can share your examples with others.



If you need more information or assistance with sharing your accreditation story, we are here to help. Email us at communications@accreditation.ca.

