

## ICANL Accreditation: Why it Counts

**It demonstrates a commitment to quality care.** The purpose of the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Nuclear Medicine Laboratories (ICANL) is "to ensure high quality patient care and to promote health care by providing a mechanism to encourage and recognize the provision of quality nuclear cardiology and nuclear medicine diagnostic evaluations by a process of voluntary accreditation." Through the accreditation process, laboratories assess every aspect of daily operation and its impact on the quality of health care provided to patients. While completing the accreditation application, laboratories often identify and correct potential problems, revising protocols and validating quality assurance programs. Because accreditation is renewed every three years, a long-term commitment to quality and self-assessment is developed and maintained. Laboratories may use ICANL accreditation as the foundation to create and achieve realistic quality care goals.

**It provides a confidential peer-review.** Designed to serve laboratories as an educational tool, ICANL accreditation is made up of two crucial steps. First, laboratories conduct a detailed self-evaluation using the *Essentials and Standards* and the application. Completion of the application requires detailed information on all aspects of laboratory operation as well as the submission of actual case studies for review. The case studies are crucial in determining the laboratory's compliance with the *Essentials and Standards* and are the basis for judgment of the quality of work that laboratories perform. Once the self-evaluation is completed, the documents and case studies are reviewed by the ICANL Board of Directors. All aspects of the review are confidential.

**It's a recruiting tool.** Accredited laboratories can use their accreditation as a recruiting tool to attract the best and brightest physicians and technologists. Talented professionals look for high-quality programs, and accreditation assures potential employees that a laboratory is dedicated to achieving the highest standards for patient care.

**It gets you FULL Reimbursement.** Many insurance companies across the country have initiated mandatory accreditation for any lab that wants to get reimbursed for services provided. The ICANL Accreditation process meets insurance company requirements for accreditation, and provides the assurance to those companies and patients that you are providing the highest quality of care.

**It demonstrates accountability.** Health care organizations are held to very high levels of accountability, by peers and by the general public. Currently, two third-party payers -- United Healthcare of Wisconsin and Oxford Health Plans (Connecticut, New Jersey, New York) -- have implemented policies requiring their provider facilities performing nuclear cardiology procedures to be accredited. Similar draft payment policies are pending throughout the United States. Laboratories attaining accreditation before it is required for reimbursement demonstrate a willingness to surpass current expectations. The general public and members of the nuclear medicine and nuclear cardiology communities will recognize an unmatched commitment to providing quality health care by laboratories that achieve ICANL accreditation.