



American Hospital
Association

SPECIAL BULLETIN

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JOINT COMMISSION BOARD DELAYS MEDICAL STAFF STANDARD MS 1.20

The Joint Commission's Board of Commissioners on Friday agreed to suspend implementation of Standard MS 1.20, which addresses medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, and interaction between medical staff and hospital leadership. The standard was slated to go into effect January 1, 2009, but meeting that deadline would have been difficult for hospitals if they would have had to make changes to their medical staff bylaws to be in compliance. The suspension comes at the recommendation of a task force that has been looking into how to mitigate concerns about the impact of revisions the Commission made to the standard in mid-2007. The Board agreed to extend the time frame for the task force's work so the task force can prepare a report for the Board's August meeting, when the Board will review the task force's full recommendations. The AHA is represented on the task force.

Among the concerns being addressed are:

- The new MS 1.20 language came as a surprise to the field.
- The language of the standard is confusing. For example, in the standard as adopted, the term "organized medical staff" is used ubiquitously but refers to different groups of physicians in different parts of the standard.
- The new standard appears to diminish the responsibility and authority of the hospital board and medical executive committee.