

# IAC Vein Center Accreditation

How we got here, where we are now, and goals for the future.

**BY LOWELL S. KABNICK, MD, RPHS, FACS, FACPH, AND ALAN M. DIETZEK, MD, RPVI, FACS**

Uniting the distinctive combination of evidence-based medicine with the consensus of expert opinion among a multitude of vein specialists, including interventionists, general and vascular surgeons, dermatologists, phlebologists, and technologists, the new Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC) Vein Center accreditation division offers a process by which centers that perform evaluation and management of superficial venous disorders can voluntarily demonstrate their commitment to quality patient care.

## CREATION OF THE NEW ACCREDITING DIVISION

The IAC Vein Center has been created and is managed by the IAC, a nonprofit organization that has been known for its accreditation programs since 1990 and is guided by its mission of improving health care through accreditation. Through an oftentimes challenging intersocietal approach built to unite all specialties that were stakeholders within a given treatment modality, the new IAC Vein Center program continues to follow this model and is supported by 10 sponsoring organizations. The IAC Board of Directors comprises representatives from medical societies related to superficial venous disorders (the American Academy of Dermatology, the American College of Phlebology, the American College of Surgeons, the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association, the American Venous Forum, the Society for Vascular Surgery, the Society for Clinical Vascular Surgery, the Society for Vascular Ultrasound, the Society for Vascular Medicine, and the Society of Interventional Radiology).

The IAC Vein Center program defines a vein center as a facility where venous evaluation, management, and treatment are performed and is designed to accredit centers that perform procedures that treat superficial venous disorders. To be eligible to apply for IAC Vein Center accreditation, facilities must have the capability

to provide at least two of the following four superficial venous procedures: sclerotherapy, ambulatory phlebectomy, saphenous vein ablation, and nonoperative management of chronic venous insufficiency with ulceration. Facilities are assessed by a panel of experts on aspects deemed critical to the provision of quality patient care, with an onsite visit as part of each application review. The IAC Vein Center Board of Directors reviews the findings and renders an accreditation decision: full grant, limited grant, or delay.

## CURRENT STATUS

Published on October 2, 2013, "IAC Standards for Vein Center Accreditation: Superficial Venous Evaluation and Management" is an extensive document defining the minimal requirements for vein centers to provide quality patient care. These standards are used by facilities as both a guideline and the foundation to create and achieve realistic quality care goals. These are the minimum standards for accreditation of a superficial venous center and also represent the minimum requirements to which an accredited facility is held accountable. The online application for accreditation in Superficial Venous Evaluation and Management was launched on November 4, 2013. Both clinical and administrative support is available through the IAC as facilities explore the standards and work on completing their applications. Events such as live webinars provide additional guidance.

The interest in this new accrediting body has been very positive. Numerous centers have initiated work on their applications for accreditation and are in the process of preparing their submissions. To date, three centers have earned accreditation in Superficial Venous Treatment and Management. Future endeavors by the IAC Vein Center may include program expansion to accredit deep vein treatment and management, as well as treatment of the lymphatic system.

## GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

As the prevalence of accreditation among vein centers becomes more abundant throughout the United States and Canada, it is anticipated that the published standards will serve as a resource for fostering elimination of the current confusion and inconsistency for practitioners, patients, and payers. As the program grows, many leaders foresee the IAC becoming the intermediary between the various professional societies, payers, and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, with the role of the societies being to develop practice guidelines and that of accreditation to assess the quality that can then be used as the base mechanism for payment. Furthermore, the previously mentioned standards will serve as a helpful resource to the network of Medicare Administrative Contractors as they process claims and educate providers on billing requirements. This uniformity in payment policies will likely resonate among the private payers as well.

Through the establishment of consistent payment policies, which for most is a more critical concept than variance in the actual reimbursement itself, the administrative burden and associated costs will effectively be reduced for the practices, allowing them to concentrate their efforts on delivering the best possible patient care. Accredited practices are encouraged to market their

status to patients, educating them on the concept that accreditation conveys the confidence that they are receiving care in a center that has been reviewed and recognized by a panel of experts who have confirmed that quality patient care is being provided. ■

*For complete details on the new program, please visit the IAC Vein Center website at [www.intersocietal.org/vein](http://www.intersocietal.org/vein) or contact the staff at (800) 838-2110 for details.*

*The authors thank Sandra Katanick, IAC-CEO, and Tamara Sloper, IAC-Director of Marketing and Communications, for their diligence and guidance.*

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