



July 26, 2022

Dear Epilepsy Center Medical Directors,

The NAEC Board and Accreditation Committee met on June 29, 2022, to discuss and approve NAEC's Accreditation Criteria for 2023. In response to member requests to be notified about changes to accreditation criteria as early as possible, this memo details changes to the accreditation criteria that the NAEC Board has approved for 2023 and 2024. The full instructions for the 2023 NAEC Accreditation Process will be distributed in November 2022.

2023 Accreditation Process

Core Criteria: After postponing the implementation of core criteria for several years due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on epilepsy centers, NAEC will require all centers to meet them starting in 2023. These criteria are required annually with no exception or flexibility; centers with deficiencies in core criteria will not be accredited (rather than receiving conditional accreditation). The core criteria are:

- **Medical Director:** The Epilepsy Center Medical Director must have at least one of the following board certifications: ABPN epilepsy, ABPN clinical neurophysiology, ABCN clinical neurophysiology, or ABCN epilepsy monitoring. Epilepsy specialists who have trained in another country and are not board-eligible in the US will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may qualify based on equivalent training and experience.
- **One Pediatric Epilepsy Specialist for Pediatric and Adult/Pediatric Centers:** Pediatric and adult/pediatric centers must have a board-certified pediatric epileptologist, who has ABPN Child Neurology board certification in addition to at least one of the following board certifications: ABPN epilepsy, ABPN clinical neurophysiology, ABCN clinical neurophysiology, or ABCN epilepsy monitoring. Epilepsy specialists who have trained in another country and are not board-eligible in the US will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may qualify based on equivalent experience.
- **Active Presence of Epilepsy Specialist Neurosurgeon for Level 4 Centers:** Level 4 centers must have at least one neurosurgeon who has ABNS board-certification or equivalent or is "board-eligible and tracking toward ABNS certification" with special expertise in epilepsy. Note: this is not a core criterion for level 3 centers that perform surgery.
- **Presence of an EMU meeting specific criteria:** The EMU criteria implemented in 2022 are now core criteria, so all centers must have an EMU with:
 - Designated hospital beds where video and EEG data is captured and sent to a central location
 - Remote-control video cameras with 24/7 recording available (not a fixed camera)
 - Trained personnel (in seizure recognition and recording integrity) dedicated 24/7 to only monitoring video and EEG. (Not necessarily required to be traditional EEG technologist)
 - EMU safety-trained inpatient nurses
 - Epilepsy-specific staff training and protocols for seizure safety
 - Clinical decision-making by an epileptologist

Referral Relationships Between Level 3 and 4 Centers: Level 3 Centers going through the full accreditation process will be required to upload proof of adult and pediatric patient referrals depending on the demographic served by the center. Adult/pediatric centers must provide proof of referrals for both adult and pediatric patients.

Outpatient Services: All centers are required to provide specialized outpatient epilepsy care. This will be implemented via a question in the Center Annual Report. Additional questions on outpatient services will be included in the Center Annual Report to shape future accreditation criteria in this topic.

EMU Policy Standards: In 2022, all centers were required to submit an EMU policy document. NAEC only assessed whether a document was uploaded but did not do a qualitative review of the content. In 2023, NAEC will assess whether the EMU policy document includes certain elements and will provide a sample policy on the website. The precise elements that are required will be included in the instructions released in November. This will apply to centers during their next full accreditation process year, either 2023 or 2024.

2024 Accreditation Process

Separate Accreditation for Adult and Pediatric Centers Requiring Adult/Pediatric Centers to Seek Separate Accreditation: In 2024, all adult/pediatric centers will be required to separate or to choose to be either an adult or pediatric center. If the center chooses to separate into adult and pediatric centers, then each center will need to meet all criteria for its desired level independently – each will complete the full accreditation process, pay separate dues, and would be listed separately in NAEC’s member directory. Centers could apply for different levels of accreditation for its pediatric and adult centers.

New Core Criterion: Starting in 2024, pediatric centers will be required to submit a VEEG EMU report for a patient under age 2. Pediatric centers that cannot provide this could be accredited as adult centers if they can meet all other criteria for adult centers.

Conclusion

A presentation on these accreditation changes will be part of the NAEC Annual Meeting at AES on December 5, 2022. Please contact NAEC with any questions about this information at info@naec-epilepsy.org.

Thank you for continued membership in NAEC and your commitment to providing high-quality care to your patients.

Sincerely,



Susan T. Herman, M.D.
President