

Dennis S. O’Leary, MD

Dr. O’Leary is President Emeritus of The Joint Commission. Under his leadership, The Joint Commission successfully transformed its accreditation process to focus on actual organization performance in the provision of patient care. This transformation set the stage for the progressive introduction of care-related outcomes and process measures, as well as national patient safety goals, into the accreditation process. Dr. O’Leary also oversaw the introduction of cutting-edge standards related to patient safety, pain management, use of patient restraints, and emergency preparedness. Later, he spearheaded the launching of a series of Joint Commission public policy initiatives which addressed the nurse staffing crisis, health professions educational reform, health literacy, and the nexus between patient safety and the tort system, among other issues. Prior to joining The Joint Commission, Dr. O’Leary served as Dean for Clinical Affairs at the George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, D.C. During his 15-year tenure at George Washington, he achieved the faculty rank of Professor of Medicine and served as Medical Director of the University Hospital for over a decade.

Dr. O’Leary has been active in a variety of professional activities. He served as President and Chairman of the Board of the District of Columbia Medical Society and was a founding member of the National Capital Area Health Care Coalition. After joining The Joint Commission, he became a Master of the American College of Physicians, an initial Fellow of the American College of Physician Executives, and a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences. In 2000, he was identified by *Modern Healthcare* as “one of the 25 most influential leaders in health care” during the past quarter century. Dr. O’Leary is currently Chief Strategy Officer of Awarepoint, an RFID technology start-up company, and also serves on the Board of the Institute of Healthcare Improvement and on the Steering Group of the Lucian Leape Institute at the National Patient Safety Foundation. He is a past winner of the Distinguished Service Awards of the American Medical Association and of the American Health Information Management Association, as well as a recipient of the Joint Commission’s Ernest Amory Codman Award. Dr. O’Leary received his BA from Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts and his MD from Cornell University Medical College in New York City, and then completed his residency and fellowship training at the University of Minnesota Hospital in Minneapolis and Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, New York. He is board certified in Internal Medicine and Hematology.