



What YOU Need to Know About Adult Congenital Heart Association ACHD Accreditation



The mission of the Adult Congenital Heart Association is to empower the congenital heart disease community by advancing access to resources and specialized care that improve patient-centered outcomes.



What does the Adult Congenital Heart Association (ACHA) do?

ACHA empowers the congenital heart disease (CHD) community with education and expertise to enable the transition between pediatric and adult congenital heart disease (ACHD) care, ultimately helping patients thrive.

Why did ACHA lead the Accreditation effort?

As the primary source of education and resources for adults with CHD, ACHA is the trusted partner of those living in the United States with CHD, providing a network of experts with an understanding and knowledge base about their disease—no matter where they are in the country, and regardless of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background or gender.

What is the Accreditation criteria?

The criteria includes personnel requirements, onsite access to specialized equipment, the ability to offer specific medical services, and having policies and procedures in place to ensure the highest level of care for adults with CHD. For a full list of ACHA ACHD accreditation criteria, please visit our website at achaheart.org.

Why Does Accreditation Matter?

Accreditation enhances the standard of care to meet the needs of the growing ACHD population, and bridges the gap in understanding between CHD patients and providers. The ACHD field is relatively new and, because patients are living longer, there is a need to understand how to treat individuals with typical conditions associated with aging, along with CHD.

There are currently more than 40 accredited centers in the United States. Exciting developments show accreditation's importance to the CHD community:

- In a study published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, the most powerful factor predicting the lowest pre-transplant mortality was being listed at an ACHA ACHD Accredited site.
- *U.S. News & World Report* now uses accreditation as a factor in their ranking and reviews.

ACHA ACHD Accreditation has been endorsed by numerous patient advocacy and professional organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Cardiology and American Heart Association.

How was the Accreditation criteria determined?

ACHA worked with doctors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, and patients over a number of years to create a well-thought-out accreditation process. ACHA then convened a steering committee with top professionals in ACHD care to vet and finalize the criteria for accreditation.

Why is it important to see a provider that specializes in ACHD care?

While many patients are comfortable with their current providers, a general cardiologist may not know exactly what a CHD patient needs. There are many types of heart defects associated with CHD and treatment options are constantly changing. There are also several comorbidities associated with CHD. Accreditation means doctors will truly understand all CHD defects and the exact components of care and will be in the communication loop with all other providers.

Why is Accreditation important for my health?

Patients with CHD need specialized care and testing that is best provided by ACHD specialists. An accredited network will provide you with access to top ACHD doctors around the country—a connected group of healthcare providers who will better understand what you need in terms of care.

What else should I know?

Through the accreditation process, knowing where there are ACHD providers can help reduce anxiety around activities that most take for granted, such as traveling and flying. Accreditation also provides peace of mind that no matter where you are in the country, there is a qualified adult congenital cardiologist nearby, whether in person or on the phone.

