



ACCREDITATION SANS FRONTIÈRES

Understanding Your ASF Accreditation

A short guide for patients, residents, and families

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Where This Information Comes From

If you've seen an ASF accreditation mark at a hospital, clinic, or care home, this short guide explains what that actually means, what it doesn't promise, how to check it's real, and what to do if something concerns you.

1. What ASF Accreditation Means

ASF accreditation means an organization was checked by an outside team — not by itself — against a published set of standards, and met them.

The people who did the checking are trained and certified specifically to do this work. They looked at real records, watched real care happening, and talked to real staff and, often, real patients.

It is not a badge an organization can just buy or claim. It has to be earned, and it has to be checked again, regularly, to stay current.

2. What It Does — and Doesn't — Promise

Accreditation means the organization met the standard on the day it was checked, and has committed to keeping it up between checks.

It does not mean nothing will ever go wrong there. No hospital, anywhere, can promise that — and any organization that claims otherwise is promising something no one can deliver.

What accreditation should tell you is something different, and just as important: if something does go wrong, this organization has agreed to a real process for finding out why and fixing it — not hiding it.

3. How to Check an Accreditation Claim Is Real

You don't have to take an organization's word for it. ASF keeps a public list of every organization it has accredited, and what their current status actually is.

You can look up any organization by name and see:

- Whether they are currently accredited, and against which ASF standard
- When their accreditation was granted
- When it's next due to be checked again

If an organization's status has ever changed — for instance, if accreditation was withdrawn — that stays visible too. ASF doesn't quietly remove that information.

4. Questions Worth Asking

Being accredited doesn't mean you shouldn't ask questions. Here are a few worth asking any provider, accredited or not:

- “How do you make sure you have the right patient before starting any treatment?”
- “How do you check my medications don't interact with each other?”
- “What do you do to prevent infections here?”
- “If I'm being moved to another team or another place, how do you make sure they know what they need to know about me?”

A confident, specific answer is a good sign. A vague one is worth following up on.

5. Why Asking Actually Helps

This isn't just reassurance — asking questions and staying involved in your own care has a real, measured effect. The World Health Organization has found that good patient engagement can reduce the overall burden of avoidable harm in healthcare by up to fifteen percent [1]. That's not a small number. It means the questions in Section 4 are not a formality — they are one of the more effective tools you actually have.

This is also part of why ASF's own standards ask organizations to genuinely listen to patients and families, not just treat them as recipients of care decided elsewhere.

6. If Something Concerns You

If you have a concern about the care you or someone you love received at an ASF-accredited organization, you don't have to raise it with the organization alone, and you don't have to stay quiet about it.

You can tell ASF directly. You can ask that your name not be shared with the organization. And raising a concern in good faith is protected — no accredited organization is allowed to treat you differently for speaking up.

Speaking up is not a complaint against you. It's exactly what a real accreditation system is supposed to make possible.

Where This Information Comes From

This guide is written in plain language, but nothing in it is invented. Here is where the facts come from:

[1] World Health Organization. Patient Safety [fact sheet]. Geneva: WHO; 2023.

[2] Joint Commission. Speak Up patient safety education program. Oakbrook Terrace (IL): The Joint Commission; 2026.

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This guide is a plain-language companion to ASF's published policies. Where anything here and a formal ASF policy differ, the formal policy governs — but the two are written to say the same thing, one for reading quickly and one for reading carefully.