

*COVID-19 Webinar for Ambulatory Health Care Accreditation*

# Q&A With The Joint Commission

July 27, 2021

# Today's Panel

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The Joint Commission

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The Joint Commission

# Recovery and The Joint Commission

# Your questions

You have asked several questions about our survey process during COVID-19:

- How or when will we get a survey?
- What type of instruction have you provided your surveyors?
- What will that survey process look like, any differences?
- What will the surveyors focus on?

# When and how will survey activity resume?

- Survey activity has been ongoing. Most surveys are onsite with the exception of telehealth organizations.
- As of March 15, 2021, account executives are no longer contacting organizations regarding the scheduling of an on-site event. Organizations should monitor the Notification of Scheduled Events section of the Joint Commission Connect page for notification.
- We are aware that surveys are past their due dates, CMS is also aware – we will conduct those surveys when we are able to do so.
- We will prioritize initial and past due organizations.

# Offsite (virtual) survey

**Offsite (virtual) survey**– we have been transitioning away from this model since March 15th

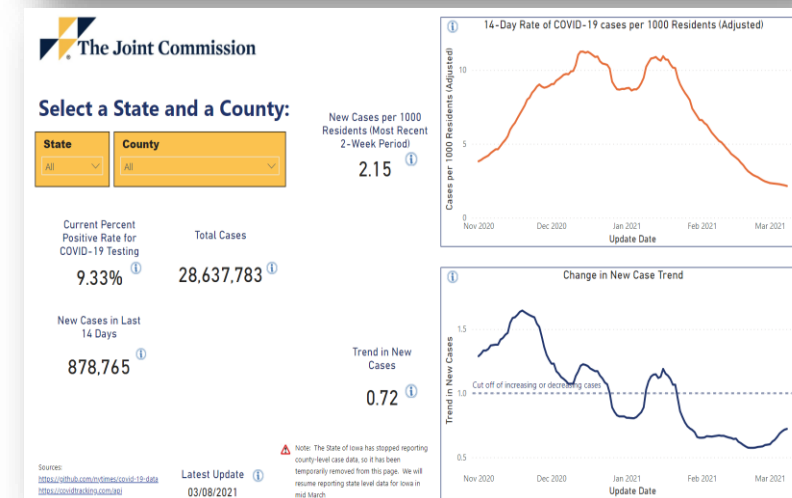
- Surveys will primarily be conducted onsite
- If an offsite event is already in progress, i.e., dry run conducted, the following will be used to conduct the survey:
  - Secure Zoom technology for the survey and facility review
  - Use of a secure SharePoint site for document upload to review pre-survey

# How do you determine where to conduct onsite surveys?

## Community Prevalence Dashboard

- Number of COVID-19 cases are lower with less impact to organizations
- Cases/thousand population and new cases within the county
- Determination that our staff can travel to area safely and find appropriate accommodations

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of The Joint Commission website with a search bar and a 'Login' button. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > Resources > Research > Operations Support Research'. The main content area features a heading for 'Operations Support Research' with a sub-heading 'Analysis and interpretation of data to inform and support Joint Commission programs and services.' To the right is a 'Research' menu with options for 'Operations Support Research', 'Evaluation Research', and 'Health Services Research'. Below this is the 'COVID Community Prevalence Dashboard' section, which includes a brief description of the dashboard's purpose and a 'View community COVID rates' button.



<https://www.jointcommission.org/resources/research/operations-support-research/>

# What instructions have been provided to our surveyors?

- **Follow the most current CDC guidelines**
- Do not travel if you are sick
- Do not travel if you have been in close contact with individuals with known or suspected COVID-19
- Avoid large crowds
- When traveling wear a mask/face covering
- Practice physical distancing
- Practice good hand hygiene



# What instructions have been provided to our surveyors?

- **Review and follow individual state department of health specific travel regulations\*\***
- When onsite wear a medical mask and eye protection is encouraged
- **Follow the organizations' infection prevention and control policies for entry and use of PPE**
- Do NOT enter at risk or confirmed COVID-19 resident rooms
- Do NOT enter rooms where high-risk procedures performed
- The Joint Commission does not have a routine COVID-19 testing program for surveyors

*\*\*Joint Commission surveyors are designated as essential workers*

# What has changed about the survey process?

The survey process and its components will remain the same however here are some guidelines for the survey:

- Limiting the number of individuals in group sessions
- The use of audio or videoconferencing could be incorporated to safely expand the number of attendees for sessions
- Use of masks will be a routine practice
- Maximize the use of technology to eliminate the number of people needed to sit directly next to an individual for an extended period of time. (For example, screen sharing or projecting medical records)
- Interviewing patients and staff by telephone
- Driving in separate cars to offsite or patient homes

# Survey process - continued

- We will NOT Enter at risk or confirmed COVID-19 rooms or homes.
- We will avoid visiting a unit with any confirmed COVID-19 patients when possible.
- Limited physical review of high risk and aerosol generating procedures
- Consider using a simulation and/or distant review of certain activities/procedures
- Practice social/physical distancing during the survey
- Follow “PPE” and risk reduction strategies as established by the CDC
- Limit attendance at group sessions e.g., opening, briefings, system tracers
- Limiting observers or scribes to avoid additional exposure during the survey

# What will be the focus of survey activities?

- During the opening conference we will have a discussion with you about the impact of the current pandemic and your organization's response.
- We will discuss both Infection Control and Emergency Management.
- The focus of our survey will not be the timeframe of the public health emergency but the current situation within your organization.

# Additional Questions

For onsite surveys, should staff/surveyors be vaccinated?

- The Joint Commission does not require surveyors receive a COVID-19 vaccine, although it is encouraged
- Many surveyors are vaccinated

Can we provide additional avoid dates?

- We would ask that you do not provide additional avoid dates due to the difficulty in scheduling surveys – avoid dates already submitted will be honored to the extent we can do so.

# Pre-Submitted Questions

If your survey doesn't occur in time for your certificate to be updated within 3 years of the last survey, can you please define the extension status with Medicare as it relates to deemed status?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

What will the site visit survey agenda look like for organizations that recently underwent a virtual triennial survey? Which elements of the virtual survey will be repeated? How soon after the virtual survey can we expect the site survey to take place?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Are there specific and additional standards/EPs that have been established in relation to COVID for the inspection process?



# Pre-Submitted Questions

Can we expect a Joint Commission surveyor to be on-site in person for our OBS survey this year in NYC?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

If your visit is some time away, what documentation needs to be kept/logged to show what steps you took during the COVID pandemic?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

What COVID-19-specific questions can we anticipate?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

If our organization is participating as a COVID vaccination site for the community (non-patients) at the time of survey, will surveyors want to review the vaccination site/process as part of the survey?

# Environment of Care and Life Safety

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Fire Safety: Is it mandatory to have sprinklers in an ambulatory surgery center?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Please review annual evaluation of emergency preparedness and what types of issues we should document.

# Pre-Submitted Questions

If a new building is being constructed (new construction), are there any recommendations or guidelines that should be followed at the start of construction related to COVID?



# Pre-Submitted Questions

What documentation will be expected to prove our use of our Emergency Management plan during the pandemic and what will documentation be once it is over?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Is there guidance for using outside tents for triage?

# Infection Control Practices

# Pre-Submitted Questions

During survey, what is The Joint Commission looking for regarding infection control and COVID-19?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Do the usual infection prevention standards apply to telemedicine companies and providers working remotely?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

What type of COVID-19 documentation is The Joint Commission looking for?

In the Infection Prevention and Control Plan or Risk Assessment are there any infection control requirements for documentation specific to COVID-19?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Should vaccinated staff still wear a mask in non-clinical spaces in outpatient areas?

## **Resource:**

Interim Infection Prevention and Control  
Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the  
Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

How can an organization conserve facemasks for staff?

## **Resources:**

Optimizing Supply of PPE and Other Equipment during Shortages

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/general-optimization-strategies.html>

Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of Facemasks

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html>



# Pre-Submitted Questions

OSHA respiratory protection questions:

Is a medical professional always required to review the medical questionnaire for employees wearing a respirator?

Is an agency responsible for fit testing/respiratory protection plans if an employee chooses to wear a respirator, but is not required?

## **Resource:**

OSHA Personal Protective Equipment, Respiratory Protection Standard

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.134>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Is screening for COVID-19 required for all persons (patients, visitors and healthcare workers) who enter the facility and are there recommendations for screening and documentation?

## **Resource:**

Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

In an open room with bays in the Infusion Center, can care be provided for both COVID-19 positive patients and regular patients at the same time?

**Resource:**

Infection Control Guidance for Healthcare Professionals about  
Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

How often do we need to disinfect high touch areas?

**Resource:**

Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

# Pre-Submitted Questions

Do patients still need to have pre-procedure COVID-19 testing completed?

**Resource:** Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

# CMS 1135 Waivers

# Pre-Submitted Questions

What date does the CMS 1135 Waiver expire?

# Public Health Emergency (PHE) Extension

The Department of Health and Human Services released a statement on Monday, 07/19/21 stating the PHE was extended

The renewal effective date is Tuesday 07/20/21 and will last for 90 days

This is the sixth extension of the PHE

★ 1135 Waivers will remain in effect during the declared PHE



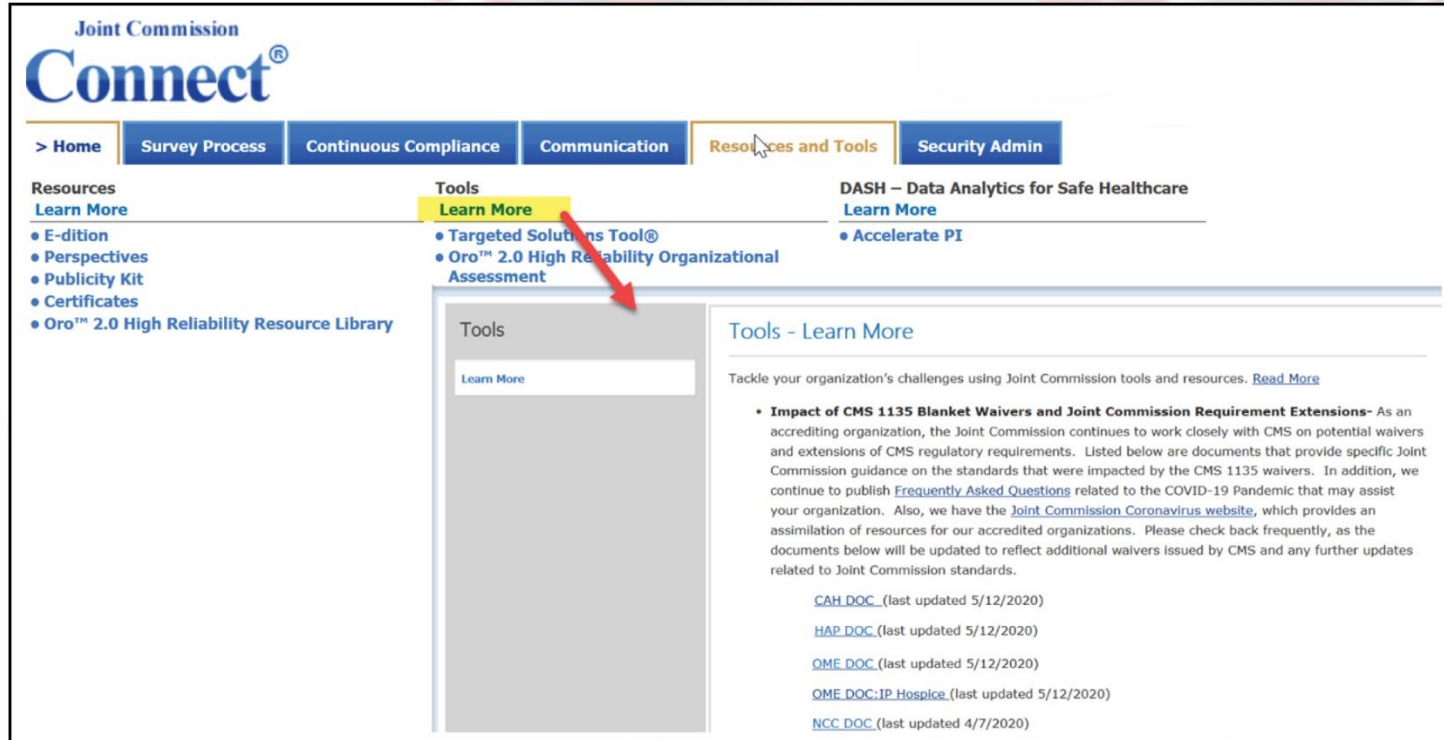
# Pre-Submitted Questions

Would you please clarify if there is any current grace for staff annual education/competencies in 2021?

# Pre-Submitted Questions

We're interested in learning about the waivers that apply to office site visits.

# Looking for more information on CMS 1135 Waivers?



The screenshot shows the Joint Commission Connect website interface. At the top, the logo "Joint Commission Connect" is displayed. Below it is a navigation bar with tabs: Home, Survey Process, Continuous Compliance, Communication, Resources and Tools (highlighted), and Security Admin. Under the "Resources and Tools" tab, there are three main sections: "Resources" with a "Learn More" link and a list of items (E-dition, Perspectives, Publicity Kit, Certificates, Oro™ 2.0 High Reliability Resource Library); "Tools" with a "Learn More" link and a list of items (Targeted Solutions Tool®, Oro™ 2.0 High Reliability Organizational Assessment); and "DASH – Data Analytics for Safe Healthcare" with a "Learn More" link and "Accelerate PI". A red arrow points from the "Tools" "Learn More" link to a sub-section titled "Tools - Learn More". This sub-section contains a "Learn More" button and a detailed text block about the impact of CMS 1135 Blanket Waivers and Joint Commission Requirement Extensions, followed by several document links with their last update dates.

Joint Commission  
**Connect**<sup>®</sup>

> Home Survey Process Continuous Compliance Communication **Resources and Tools** Security Admin

**Resources**  
[Learn More](#)

- E-dition
- Perspectives
- Publicity Kit
- Certificates
- Oro™ 2.0 High Reliability Resource Library

**Tools**  
[Learn More](#)

- Targeted Solutions Tool®
- Oro™ 2.0 High Reliability Organizational Assessment

**DASH – Data Analytics for Safe Healthcare**  
[Learn More](#)

- Accelerate PI

**Tools - Learn More**

Tackle your organization's challenges using Joint Commission tools and resources. [Read More](#)

- **Impact of CMS 1135 Blanket Waivers and Joint Commission Requirement Extensions-** As an accrediting organization, the Joint Commission continues to work closely with CMS on potential waivers and extensions of CMS regulatory requirements. Listed below are documents that provide specific Joint Commission guidance on the standards that were impacted by the CMS 1135 waivers. In addition, we continue to publish [Frequently Asked Questions](#) related to the COVID-19 Pandemic that may assist your organization. Also, we have the [Joint Commission Coronavirus website](#), which provides an assimilation of resources for our accredited organizations. Please check back frequently, as the documents below will be updated to reflect additional waivers issued by CMS and any further updates related to Joint Commission standards.

[CAH.DOC](#) (last updated 5/12/2020)

[HAP.DOC](#) (last updated 5/12/2020)

[OME.DOC](#) (last updated 5/12/2020)

[OME.DOC:IP Hospice](#) (last updated 5/12/2020)

[NCC.DOC](#) (last updated 4/7/2020)

Accredited organizations can learn more by visiting **Resources and Tools > Tools > Learn More** in their *Joint Commission Connect*<sup>®</sup> extranet site.

Time for a few  
more questions

# Resources

- COVID Resources

- <https://www.jointcommission.org/covid-19/>

- Standards Interpretation

- <https://www.jointcommission.org/standards/standard-faqs/>

# Thank You

We support your efforts  
in response to the  
COVID-19 pandemic and  
hope to provide helpful  
resources

