Coronavirus updates

FAQs available for recent position statement on use of face masks brought from home
In response to its recent position statement on the use of face masks brought from home, The Joint Commission has put together a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) that answer these questions:

- Why did The Joint Commission feel it was necessary to develop this position statement?
- Is The Joint Commission advocating for routine use of N95 masks?
- What does it mean when The Joint Commission says it supports allowing staff to bring their own masks or respirators to wear at work when their health care organizations cannot provide them with adequate protection “commensurate with the risk of infection to which they are exposed by the nature of their work.”

Check out the FAQs.

Joint Commission extends suspension of regular surveys until end of May
Due to the continued spread of COVID-19, The Joint Commission announced earlier this month that all regular surveys and reviews will remain on hold until the end of May. The Joint Commission made this determination after information from federal and state governments indicated that social distancing recommendations and stay-at-home orders will be in effect for longer than originally anticipated.

All postponed survey events will occur once normal operations are resumed. If any organizations go past their accreditation due date, accreditation will be extended without disruption to their accreditation status. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has assured that Medicare payment status will not be affected.

The Joint Commission is continuing to redirect its resources to best assist organizations during this everchanging and stressful time. Organizations may be contacted virtually by a Joint Commission surveyor in the coming weeks who can provide support. Other available resources include:

- The Standards Interpretation Group (SIG), which is available to answer questions about Joint Commission recommendations and requirements. SIG also has been answering the most frequent questions related COVID-19 daily on The Joint Commission’s social media platforms.
- Webinars on preparing for the impact of COVID 19. Last week, The Joint Commission presented a webinar on managing the COVID-19 threat in the behavioral health care setting and nursing care centers. Future webinars also will focus on preventing the spread of coronavirus in hospitals and ambulatory health care settings.
- A coronavirus resource portal provides current guidance and recommendations for staff as they engage in the frontlines of this pandemic.
- A public statement supporting the use of masks brought from home, along with additional guidance for keeping health care workers safe when personal protective equipment is in short supply.

The Joint Commission hopes these resources are helpful as organizations and their staff continue to develop their response to COVID-19. Organizations can contact their account executive to get connected to these resources and answers to questions.
Check out guidance, resources for creating capacity for surge patients
As organizations continue to prepare for and treat patients with COVID-19, The Joint Commission has created a web portal with resources to assist health care workers. This includes a section on guidance for dealing with a surge of patients. It includes:

- **Emergency Management Healthcare Environment Checklist**
- **5 key steps for finding extra hospital capacity**
- **Surge Hospitals: Providing Safe Care in Emergencies**
- **CMS Expanded Telehealth Services**

[View more COVID-19 resources.](#)

**Reminder: Update your e-alert information to receive important COVID-19 updates**
The Joint Commission periodically shares important updates about COVID-19 resources and guidance. It’s more important than ever to double check to make sure your information is correct on the [E-Alerts](#) page. Returning subscribers will be asked to enter their email address so that their preferences will be retrieved.

**Accreditation**

**Implementation of new perinatal safety standards pushed back to January 2021**
Considering the impact COVID-19 is having on organizations, The Joint Commission is delaying the implementation of two new perinatal safety standards for accredited hospitals. The standards are designed to address the rising maternal morbidity and mortality rates.

The requirements for maternal hemorrhage and severe hypertension/preeclampsia will now go into effect on Jan. 1, 2021. Please note that while the standards will appear in the spring update of the [Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals](#) as being effective on July 1, hospitals undergoing surveys will not be held to these perinatal safety requirements until January 2021.

[View the prepublication standards.](mailto:jhurlburt@jointcommission.org)

**Resources**

**Up in the blogosphere with The Joint Commission**

- **On Infection Prevention & Control** — [Conserving Face Masks and Respirators During a Critical Shortage](#): One of the most prevalent questions we’re hearing is how should organizations conserve face masks and respirators during this critical shortage?
- **On Infection Prevention & Control** — [PPE Considerations when Caring for Known or Suspected Patients with COVID-19](#): Based on the World Health Organization (WHO)–China Joint Report on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) What Healthcare Personnel Should Know about Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection reports, face masks are an acceptable alternative to respirators when caring for a person with known or suspected COVID-19, except when participating in aerosol generating procedures, writes Robert Campbell, PharmD, director, clinical standards interpretation for hospital/ambulatory programs.
- **On Infection Prevention & Control** — [Duration for Continuing Disaster Privileges](#): Volunteer Licensed Independent Practitioners (LIPs) who have been granted disaster privileges may continue to provide care, treatment and services under the disaster privileging option (see Emergency Management (EM) standard EM.02.02.13) for the period of time the organization continues to operate under its...
Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), writes Robert Campbell, PharmD, director, clinical standards interpretation for hospital/ambulatory programs.

- **On Infection Prevention & Control — Granting Privileges to Volunteer Licensed Independent Practitioners**: Learn more about the requirements for granting privileges in a disaster for ambulatory care organizations in a blog post by Robert Campbell, PharmD, director, clinical standards interpretation for hospital/ambulatory programs.

- **On Infection Prevention & Control — Screening Requirements for Volunteer Practitioners who are Not Licensed Independent Practitioners**: The Joint Commission frequently receives questions as far as what is required from a human resources standpoint for a volunteer who is NOT a licensed independent practitioner (LIP), writes Robert Campbell, PharmD, director, clinical standards interpretation for hospital/ambulatory programs.

- **Ambulatory Buzz — Preparing Ambulatory Care for COVID-19**: We’re very concerned for our ambulatory care organizations and the unique challenges they face in preventing transmission among patients. Two weeks ago, our executive director for Ambulatory Care Services, Pearl Darling, blogged about basic suggestions for addressing the COVID-19 outbreak. During the past few weeks, we’ve had more time to digest the situation and start planning for the days, weeks and months ahead. It’s important to stay in contact as the situation progresses, writes Sylvia Garcia-Houchins, MSN, RN, CIC, director of infection prevention and control.

- **Improvement Insights — Establishing Clinician Well-Being as a National Priority**: Clinician burnout has reached alarming proportions. In various reports, up to half of practicing doctors and nurses experience some manifestations of burnout, and learners in these professions are almost equally affected. Thankfully, this has gotten the attention of leaders in our professions, writes George E. Thibault, MD.

Learn more about Joint Commission Resources’ offerings online or call 877-223-6866.