



Joint Commission Reiterates Importance of Removing Barriers to Mental Health Care for Staff

March 31, 2021

We have passed the one-year mark of the COVID-19 public health emergency, and health care staff continue to deal with the serious toll this pandemic has taken on their mental health.

The Joint Commission believes it is critical to remind health care organizations to take steps to remove barriers preventing clinicians from seeking mental health care services. It was well-documented prior to the pandemic that clinicians fear seeking mental health treatment because of concerns related to professional repercussions, specifically because questions about their mental health history may be asked during the credentialing and licensing process. Recent polls taken during the pandemic reiterate that the concerns still exist.

The Joint Commission reaffirms its [May 2020 statement](#) that we do not require organizations to ask about a clinician's history of mental health conditions or treatment. The Joint Commission strongly encourages organizations to not ask about past history of mental health conditions or treatment and supports recommendations to limit questions to conditions that *currently* impair the clinician's ability to perform his or her job. Organizations should review questions and ensure these questions do not hinder clinicians from seeking mental health services. This is one small step we can take to support health care workers.

Over the last year, The Joint Commission has issued a [Quick Safety](#) on promoting psychosocial well-being of health care staff and a [Sentinel Event Alert](#), along with many other publications addressing health care staff well-being. It is vital that health care workers feel supported in accessing needed mental health resources.