COVID-19 Webinar for Ambulatory Health Care Accreditation

Q&A With The Joint Commission

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Today’s Panel

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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

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?
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?
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
Pre-Submitted Questions

How can an organization conserve facemasks for staff?

Resources:
Optimizing Supply of PPE and Other Equipment during Shortages

Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of Facemasks
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
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
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)
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
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

CMS 1135 Waivers
Pre-Submitted Questions

What date does the CMS 1135 Waiver expire?
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.
Accredited organizations can learn more by visiting Resources and Tools > Tools > Learn More in their Joint Commission Connect® 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