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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Environment of Care and Life Safety
Pre-Submitted Questions

Please review the emergency drill requirements for an ASCs participation. During a community-wide disaster, we would close.
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?
Is there guidance for using outside tents for triage?
If our emergency response is still activated for COVID, do we still need to perform a tabletop exercise?
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
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 recently implemented a policy requiring all US-based enterprise staff to be vaccinated against COVID 19.

• 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.
Infection Control Practices
Pre-Submitted Questions

What is the best disinfectant to use for COVID?

How should surface disinfection be done? Are there specific requirements for PPE?

Resources:
About List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus (COVID-19)
https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/about-list-n-disinfectants-coronavirus-covid-19-0

Mandatory OSHA Standards (29 CFR 1910.1200 and 1910.132, 133, and 138) for hazard communication and PPE appropriate for exposure to cleaning chemicals.
Pre-Submitted Questions

How often do you expect PPE competency to be demonstrated by clinical staff, once upon hire, once a year, or some other predetermined time period?
Pre-Submitted Questions

Which PPE does CDC recommend for use with clinic patients? Is the PPE the same for vaccinated and unvaccinated staff?

Pre-Submitted Questions

A center was cited for not utilizing N95 masks in the OR for every case all the time. Not just extubation/intubation. All staff/patients were negative. Are N95 masks required for ALL cases ALL the time?

Any tips for how to write your PPE policy for organizations currently who now require their employees to wear N95s?

What is the current recommendation for staff to return to work?

Pre-Submitted Questions

What is the current Federal recommendation to prevent the spread of COVID?


Pre-Submitted Questions

What is the most important thing for ASC's to do in this pandemic?
Pre-Submitted Questions

What challenges have ASCs had with cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization practices during the pandemic?
Pre-Submitted Questions

Advise on expectations for integrating pandemic into IC plan and QI. Can organizations reprioritize to focus solely on pandemic responses and use this for data collection and improvement efforts?
Pre-Submitted Questions

How long should an examination room be vacant after a patient with COVID positive results has entered the room? The patient was wearing a mask and did not have any symptoms caught at the entry point, but told the provider once in the exam room.
Pre-Submitted Questions

Do we need to postpone an elective procedure if the patient has recently been in the ER/Hospital or should we not be concerned about a possible COVID exposure?
Pre-Submitted Questions

What setting (indoor or outdoor) is The Joint Commission recommending for screening of employees/patients/visitors moving forward?
Can we stop taking the patient's temperature prior to entry to the facility?
Pre-Submitted Questions

What is the Joint Commission's position regarding PCR COVID-19 testing on fully vaccinated individuals within the 72 hour window prior to elective surgeries?

Pre-Submitted Questions

Should we routinely be swabbing patients in the outpatient setting for COVID? IF so, how often?

What is required for social distancing of patients?

Pre-Submitted Questions

Are there any new documentation requirements for infection control due to COVID 19?
Pre-Submitted Questions

Will The Joint Commission require tracking of the COVID-19 vaccines for patients and employees?
Pre-Submitted Questions

What is the current recommendation for water fountains?

CMS 1135 Waivers
Public Health Emergency (PHE) Extension

The Department of Health and Human Services released a statement on Friday, 10/15/21 stating the PHE was extended.

The renewal effective date is Monday, 10/18/21 and will last for 90 days.

The is the seventh extension of the PHE.

1135 Waivers will remain in effect during the declared PHE.
Pre-Submitted Questions

Should our organization go back to the peak pandemic phase of our emergency management response plan based on numbers in our state?
Pre-Submitted Questions

Does the waiver apply to ambulatory care facilities that screen everyone before entry into facility?
Accredited organizations can learn more by visiting Resources and Tools > Tools > Learn More in their Joint Commission Connect® extranet site.
Pre-Submitted Questions

Will there be an extension on temporary privilege timeframes?
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.