COVID-19 Webinar for Hospital Accreditation

Q&A With The Joint Commission

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Panel

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CMS 1135 Waivers
Pre-Submitted Questions

When can we expect to hear updates on the 1135 waivers?

When are waivers ending?

Will there be sufficient warning before waivers end?
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

Will surveyors want to see a detailed list of 1135 waivers you have used over the course of the last year?

Please clarify the correct documentation required for 1135 waivers.
Pre-Submitted Questions

Is the list of Joint Commission EPs impacted by CMS waivers up to date?
Pre-Submitted Questions

If we go back into Incident Command mode and enact our EOP again, can we go back to utilizing blanket waivers again?
Pre-Submitted Questions

If the State of Emergency for the pandemic has been lifted in our state, is there a formal process that the hospital needs to document and/or demonstrate regarding return to non-pandemic operations?
Pre-Submitted Questions

How much time will be provided to hospitals to revert back to compliance with standards once the national emergency is lifted?
Accredited organizations can learn more by visiting Resources and Tools > Tools > Learn More in their Joint Commission Connect® extranet site.
General Questions
Pre-Submitted Questions

Can you provide current survey findings related to COVID-19?
Pre-Submitted Questions

Are there going to be considerations given for the COVID surge in regard to the required data collection in the PI chapter? Many hospital staff were reassigned during surge activity, limiting ability to collect the required data.
Pre-Submitted Questions

Regarding protocols or policies that were implemented at the beginning of the pandemic and updated according to state and federal regulations. During the inspection, will they be required to appear from the beginning of the pandemic or only the current one?
Pre-Submitted Questions

What is the plan for cleanroom observations? Will surveyors be expecting all sites to be fully compliant with USP 800/the updates to USP 797, or will there be some exception for sites that are in process or on hold due to budget impacts seen from COVID?
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. We are transitioning from off-site/virtual surveys back to onsite surveys.
- 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 initials and past due organizations.
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
  • **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

Can you provide examples of supporting documentation that surveyors are looking for?

What documentation will be required to keep and present to surveyors who come after the pandemic?
Environment of Care and Life Safety
When is it anticipated that fire drills will be required to resume?
What are the specifics for temporarily increasing ICU bed capacity during the public health emergency?
Pre-Submitted Questions

EM030103 EP3 - If the organization activates its EOP for twice in a year for an actual event, are they exempt from both required FSEx and Exercise of Choice for that year? Also, do the FSEx and Exercise of choice have to be sequential between years?
If outpatient services in a free-standing business occupancy are hospital-sponsored services, must fire drills follow the hospital frequency (quarterly) or NFPA's annual frequency for business occupancies?
Pre-Submitted Questions

How will The Joint Commission respond to fire/life safety devices not tested due to COVID? For example, a smoke detector not tested in a room/unit with a COVID-19 patient.
Pre- Submitted Questions

Are there areas of workforce safety that will be highlighted in future surveys by The Joint Commission moving forward as a result of COVID?
Pre-Submitted Questions

What are the requirements pertaining to fire alarm hardware and door releases?

What are the requirements for overhead paging for events such as Code Green?
Do we need to have a negative pressure OR suite for surgery of COVID-19 patients, including LDR's?
Pre-Submitted Questions

Are there any updates on ventilation and infection control practices for COVID patient areas?
Pre-Submitted Questions

How will EOC standards be enforced, especially in light of PPE stations in hallways for doffing and racks to hold reusable gowns in corridors?
Pre-Submitted Questions

The state has approved removal of current drinking fountains and approved no new drinking fountain be in new hospital. Most are covered, but no freely available water is offered or available. How will The Joint Commission survey against this?
The Infection Prevention Hierarchy

- Rules and Regulations
- CoPs and CfCs*
- Manufacturers’ Instructions for Use
- Evidence-Based Guidelines and National Standards
- Consensus Documents
- Organization’s Infection Prevention and Control Policy

* For organizations that use Joint Commission accreditation for deemed status purposes or that are required by state regulation or directive, Conditions of Participation (CoPs) and/or Conditions for Coverage (CfCs) should be reviewed for applicable mandatory requirements.
Deciding IP Practices During COVID 19

Organizations MUST follow these!

- Federal Mandate
- State mandate
- CMS requirement (if deemed)
- Local Mandate
- Instructions for Use

Other sources of information:
- Evidence based guidelines
- Consensus documents
Pre-submitted Questions

How will the new COVID Emergency OSHA Guidelines affect surveys going forward?

**Resource:** COVID-19 Healthcare ETS

https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/ets
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

Is three foot spacing being implemented in healthcare settings including areas such as dining rooms?

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

What are the mask office guidelines for non-vaccinated staff who share the same open office space but sit more than 6 feet apart?

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

How can an organization conserve face masks for staff?

**Resources:**
Optimizing Supply of PPE and Other Equipment during Shortages

Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of Facemasks
Pre-Submitted Questions

We are in a recovery phase for COVID-19, but we are still having challenges with the PPE. We are using washable gowns on a “one and done” basis. Which would be the right place to keep the bins and the hampers for the washable gowns in the units?

Resource: Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of Isolation Gowns

Pre-Submitted Questions

Are there any new recommendations to combat the delta strain?

**Resource:** SARS-CoV-2 Variant Classifications and Definitions
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.