



May 28, 2020

The Joint Commission Statement on House Passage of H.R. 6800, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act

The Joint Commission appreciates the work of the Congress to continue to address the COVID-19 pandemic through the passage in the House of Representatives of H.R. 6800, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act. The Joint Commission applauds the following provisions, which will significantly help to improve the delivery of care during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- The HEROES Act requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish and maintain an online portal for hospitals and long-term care facilities to track and transmit data regarding crucial medical inventory and health care professional capacity related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Joint Commission supports this provision because with timely, comprehensive data sharing about resources, decisionmakers at many levels will be able to take informed action to address current or anticipated shortages.
- Includes funds for essential workforce employers to provide premium pay to their employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. These employees are working in our hospitals and other health care facilities to fight this pandemic. Premium pay demonstrates the nation's gratitude to these essential workers for their efforts and will help to keep families and communities healthy.
- A provision directs the National Institute of Mental Health to conduct or support research on the mental health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the effects on health care professionals. The Joint Commission supports such research, especially for health care professionals who have been tasked with working on the frontlines. The Joint Commission also supports the ability of health care professionals to access mental health services without fear of professional repercussions for seeking these services.
- Provides funds for Quality Improvement Organizations to help nursing homes struggling with infection control during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Joint Commission supports providing focused assistance to these facilities through the development and dissemination of protocols and training materials to help prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
- Requires skilled nursing facilities to provide residents with access to a telephone and to the Internet to visit remotely with family and friends during the COVID-19 pandemic. Family and friends play a critical role as part of the patient's care team, with clear benefits to a resident's overall health and mental wellbeing. The Joint Commission supports alternative accommodations so that residents are not isolated from friends and family when in-person visitation remains limited.
- Finally, the HEROES Act includes provisions that would expand opportunities in the Paycheck Protection Program, the Employee Retention Credit Program, and the Main Street Lending Program for not-for-profit organizations. Many mission-driven organizations are confronting economic challenges to help care for those affected by COVID-19 or to maintain their critical workforce in order to carry out their mission. Despite being part of the social fabric that makes this country strong, they have not had options available to them for obtaining necessary economic assistance. It is imperative that the country continues to assist the not for profit infrastructure.

The Joint Commission hopes that Congress can arrive at a bipartisan, bicameral agreement at keeping these provisions in legislation that can be expeditiously passed to the president for signature. For helpful advocacy resources, please refer to The Joint Commission's [Federal Relations and Public Policy page](#).