

COVID-19 Webinar for Laboratory Accreditation

Q&A With The Joint Commission

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Panel

Sylvia Garcia-Houchins, MBA, RN, CIC
Director
Infection Prevention and Control
The Joint Commission

Amy Null, MBA, MT(ASCP), SBB
Associate Director
Standards Interpretation Group
The Joint Commission

Bridget Kapnick, MPH
Associate Director Accreditation
The Joint Commission

Barbara Schwarzer, MHA, MSOL, MT(ASCP), CPHQ
Field Director
Accreditation and Certification Operations
The Joint Commission

Maura Naddy, MSN, RNC-OB
Associate Director
Standards Interpretation Group
The Joint Commission

Thomas J. Todro, MBA, CBET
Engineer
Standards Interpretation Group
The Joint Commission

Recovery and The Joint Commission

Your questions

You have had a number of questions about our return to survey:

- How or when will we get a survey?
- What will that survey process look like, any differences?
- What type of instruction have you provided your surveyors?
- What will the surveyors focus on?

When and how will survey activity resume?

- Survey activity continues and we have transitioned from off-site surveys back to onsite surveys.
- Counties are opening up across the US as “Go” counties or low risk counties.
 - We continue to monitor counties closely going forward as COVID rates can change
- Low risk criteria
 - Number of COVID-19 cases are lower and less impact to organizations
 - the # cases/thousand population and new cases within the county remain low
 - Determination that our staff can travel to that area safely and find appropriate accommodations.
- For Lab surveys, effective March 15, the AE will no longer contact 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.

Should we expect the survey to be longer or shorter?

- For both offsite and onsite surveys, the length of the survey will remain the same as it has been in the past.

What instructions have been provided to our field staff ?

- Do not travel if you are sick
- Do not travel if you have been in close contact with known or suspected COVID-19 patients
- When traveling they are required to wear a mask/face covering
- **Required to wear a mask on survey and follow the organizations' guidelines. The organization will provide the PPE to the surveyor as required by their policy.**
- Practice physical distancing
- Practice good hand hygiene
- Follow CDC guidelines

What has changed about the on-site survey process?

The survey process and its components will remain the same however here are some guidelines for the survey:

- **Practicing safe social distancing:** Limit the number of individuals in group sessions, minimize the number of staff who accompany a surveyor during tracer activities. Drive in separate vehicles to off site visits. Utilize technology when possible.
- **Wearing personal protective equipment:** The surveyors are required to wear face masks and we are asking that organizations provide masks and/or other PPE to surveyors based on the organization's policy.

What has changed about the on-site survey process?

The survey process and its components will remain the same however here are some guidelines for the survey:

- Utilization of enhanced technology: The goal is to maximize technology to support social distancing. This may be accomplished through screen sharing, or projection to review EMR with the organization IT platform.
- Surveyors will NOT enter at risk or confirmed COVID-19 rooms.
- Surveyor will have limited physical review of high-risk procedures
- Surveyor can consider using a simulation and/or distant review of certain activities/procedures.

What will be the focus of survey activities?

During the opening conference, the surveyor 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.
- Although the main focus of the survey will not be the past several months of the pandemic, the surveyor will review the competency, quality control, proficiency testing, correlations, and calibration verifications during this time since these activities impact the quality and accuracy of patient testing.

Additional Questions

For onsite surveys, should staff/surveyors be vaccinated?

- It is not a requirement that staff/surveyors be vaccinated, although it is encouraged.
- Many surveyors are vaccinated and can travel to additional counties.

Reporting COVID Results

What evidence of compliance with reporting COVID results to fed/state/local authorities will The Joint Commission be looking for on survey?

- Surveyors will be looking for evidence that ALL COVID test results, both positive and negative, have been reported to the state or local authorities.

Additional information

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.

Community Prevalence Dashboard

Coronavirus Resources

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The Joint Commission

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Operations Support Research

Analysis and interpretation of data to inform and support Joint Commission programs and services.

Research

- Operations Support Research
- Evaluation Research
- Health Services Research +

COVID Community Prevalence Dashboard

This interactive dashboard is intended to provide some insight into the factors that The Joint Commission considers when evaluating community COVID prevalence. Users can select a specific state and county to assess current COVID incident rates and trends.

[View community COVID rates](#)

The Joint Commission

Select a State and a County:

State: All County: All

New Cases per 1000 Residents (Most Recent 2-Week Period): 2.15

Current Percent Positive Rate for COVID-19 Testing: 9.33%

Total Cases: 28,637,783

New Cases in Last 14 Days: 878,765

Trend in New Cases: 0.72

14-Day Rate of COVID-19 cases per 1000 Residents (Adjusted)

Change in New Case Trend

Sources: <https://github.com/mytimes/covid-19-data>, <https://covidtracking.com/api>

Latest Update: 03/08/2021

Note: The State of Iowa has stopped reporting county-level case data, so it has been temporarily removed from this page. We will resume reporting state level data for Iowa in mid March.

<https://www.jointcommission.org/resources/research/operations-support-research/>

Laboratorians needed

We are looking for highly experienced, dynamic leaders in a variety of FTE statuses

We are hiring:

- medical technicians
- pathologists

If you are interested, please go to <https://www.jointcommission.org/careers/>

Pre-Submitted Questions

Do you have any updates on surveys that were late due to COVID --will there be an opportunity to have an early survey to get back to our original survey window?

General Questions

Pre-Submitted Questions

Is there a guideline for Joint Commission accredited labs to submit positive COVID specimens to the CDC (NS3) during this pandemic as a means of sequencing and identifying mutations and “breakthrough” cases?

Resource:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/cdc-role-surveillance.html>

Pre-Submitted Questions

Have you heard of any updates to extending the EUA's on COVID testing, especially since some expire in October?

Pre-Submitted Questions

Please review any IQCP changes or issues related to COVID testing.

Resource:

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/frequently-asked-questions-faqs-clia-guidance-during-covid-19-emergency-updated-12-17-2020.pdf>

Pre-Submitted Questions

What are the validation requirements for EUA tests?

Pre-Submitted Questions

Has there been an assigned date for EUA expirations for BD Veritor or Abbott BinaxNOW methods?

Resource:

<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-use-authorizations-medical-devices/historical-information-about-device-emergency-use-authorizations#ivd>

Pre-Submitted Questions

What is the standard for comparing multiple COVID testing platforms instrument comparison since this is a qualitative assay?

Pre-Submitted Questions

What is the test validation requirement for commercially available, point of care, CLIA waived, SARS-COVID tests (such as Liat, Xpert)?

Infection Control Practices

Pre-Submitted Questions

What evidence of compliance with reporting COVID results to fed/state/local authorities will The Joint Commission be looking for on survey?

Can you explain the laboratory's role in reporting COVID-19 results? If the lab reports it to their health department, do they need to report it to HHS? If the lab processes the sample but then sends it to another lab, who reports the COVID result?

Pre-Submitted Questions

Discuss the wearing of masks outside the hospital.

Resources:

CDC Your Guide to Masks (Updated August 13, 2021)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

CDC COVID Integrated View (updated weekly – last update August 15, 2021) <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

Pre-Submitted Questions

What are the latest recommendations for COVID testing?

Resource:

CDC Testing (Updated June 11, 2021)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/index.html>

Pre-Submitted Questions

What documentation is expected if any, as it relates to visitor screening?

Resource:

OSHA COVID-19 Healthcare Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) (effective July 6, 2021)

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

Pre-Submitted Questions

Can we perform rapid COVID testing on a regular workbench behind a safety shield with all testing personnel wearing full PPE, mask, gloves, lab coat and face shield?

Resources:

CDC Interim Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines for Handling and Processing Specimens Associated with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (Updated June 11, 2021) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/lab-biosafety-guidelines.html>

CDC Guidance for SARS-CoV-2 Point-of-Care and Rapid Testing (Updated July 8, 2021) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/point-of-care-testing.html#updates-previous-content>

COVID-19 Resources

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What Your Organization Needs to Know About the Coronavirus

Trusted Guidance. Trusted Resources.

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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

