

Prioritization of Survey Activities

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Memo # QSO-20-20-All

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Summary

- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is committed to taking critical steps to ensure America's health care facilities are prepared to respond to the threat of disease caused by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- On Friday, March 13, 2020, the President declared a national emergency, which triggers the Secretary's ability to authorize waivers or modifications of certain requirements pursuant to section 1135 of the Social Security Act (the Act). Under section 1135(b)(5) of the Act, CMS is prioritizing surveys by authorizing modification of timetables and deadlines for the performance of certain required activities, delaying revisit surveys, and generally exercising enforcement discretion for three weeks.
- During this three-week timeframe, only the following types of surveys will be prioritized and conducted:
 - Complaint/facility-reported incident surveys: State survey agencies (SSAs) will conduct surveys related to complaints and facility-reported incidents (FRIs) that are triaged at the Immediate Jeopardy (IJ) level. A streamlined Infection Control review tool will also be utilized during these surveys, regardless of the Immediate Jeopardy allegation.
 - Federal CMS and State surveyors will conduct targeted Infection Control surveys of providers identified through collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR). They will use a streamlined review checklist to minimize the impact on provider activities, while ensuring providers are implementing actions to protect the health and safety of individuals to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Targeted Infection Control Surveys:

Self-assessments: The Infection Control checklist referenced above will also be shared with all providers and suppliers to allow for voluntary self-assessment of their Infection Control plan and protections. Page 1 of 9 Memorandum Summary Continued • During the prioritization period, the following surveys will not be authorized: Standard surveys for long term care facilities (nursing homes), hospitals, home health agencies (HHAs), intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF/IIDs), and hospices. This includes the life safety code and Emergency Preparedness elements of those standard surveys; and revisits that are not associated with IJ. • Furthermore, for Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA), we intend to prioritize immediate jeopardy situations over recertification surveys, and generally intend to use enforcement discretion, unless immediate jeopardy situations arise. • Finally, initial certification surveys will continue to be authorized in accordance within current guidance and prioritization.

Downloads

[QSO-20-20-ALL \(PDF\)](#)

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