

August 10, 2021

Via electronic submission to: mvanamringe@jointcommission.org

Margaret VanAmringe,
Executive Vice President for Public Policy and Government Relations
The Joint Commission
Washington, DC Office
701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004

Re: Suspension of TJC surveying

Dear Ms. VanAmringe:

On behalf of our more than 470 member hospitals and health systems, including rural, urban, children's, teaching and specialty hospitals, the Texas Hospital Association writes to request a suspension of The Joint Commission's (TJC) onsite surveys and reviews.

In response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, TJC announced that, beginning on March 16, 2020, it would suspend most onsite TJC surveys and reviews. CMS agreed to the temporary suspension. Beginning on March 15, 2021, TJC announced that it would return to its usual procedures, including unannounced onsite visits, as COVID-19 incidence and caseloads of the virus decreased across the country.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) forecasting data now shows a rise in the incidence and caseloads of COVID-19 nationwide. As of August 9, 2021, the CDC reported 89,977 seven-day average in total cases reported, which is a 33.7% increase in the seven-day average from the previous week alone. CDC data also shows 8,308 seven-day average of new admissions of patients with confirmed COVID-19 between August 1, 2021–August 7, 2021, which is a 22.0% increase in the prior seven-day average between the dates of July 25, 2021–July 31, 2021.

As of August 2021, Texas Department of Health and Human Services (DSHS) reports 80,313 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the State of Texas. The total number of confirmed cases is particularly alarming when Texas DSHS data demonstrates that the seven-day average of newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 is approximately 5,256 and rising. Relatedly, the number of hospitalizations has steadily climbed to reach over 9,000 as of August 2021. Hospitalization rates continue to grow as recent Texas DSHS data reflects a fourfold increase in the seven-day rolling average of hospitalizations since July 2021. CDC data also reflects a 35 percent increase in hospitalizations in Texas from last week (August 1, 2021).

Given the immense strain on healthcare systems across the country, THA respectfully urges TJC to reinstate the suspension of onsite surveys and reviews. We recognize that some healthcare facilities may request new onsite

Ms. Margaret VanAmringe,
August 10, 2021
Page 2 of 2.

survey and review for operational purposes. Exceptions to the suspension, if commenced, should be made for those healthcare facilities that request a new onsite survey and review.

Thank you for you for considering our request. Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions at cduncan@tha.org or 512/465.1539.

Respectfully Submitted,



D. Cameron Duncan, III
Associate General Counsel
Texas Hospital Association