Advisory Notices are designed to provide official information relative to Hospital Accreditation, Certification, and Compliance activities. Should you have any questions about the content of this notice, please e-mail dnvclientdropbox@dnvgl.com.

DATE: March 17, 2020
SUBJECT: Continuation of DNV GL Healthcare surveys in light of COVID-19, for accredited hospitals and critical access hospitals
DISTRIBUTION All DNV GL Healthcare Accredited or Certified Hospitals, Applicant Hospitals, DNV GL Healthcare Employees, and Interested Parties
APPROVED BY: Patrick Horine, President

DNV GL’s purpose of Safeguarding Life, Property and The Environment extends to protecting hospital staff, contractors, visitors and communities, along with our own surveyors and their families from the risks of infectious disease. We continue to balance the CMS requirement to ensure compliance in accredited hospitals with the guidance of national authorities and individual hospital circumstances when planning surveys.

At this time, incorporating CMS guidelines, our prioritization of surveys remains in effect. With exceptions in New York, Washington, and California, we continue to conduct unannounced annual and reaccreditation surveys, prioritized complaint investigations, follow-up surveys, initial accreditations, and special surveys such as changes-of-ownership, facility replacements or service extensions.

CMS has offered new flexibility to AOs to communicate with their customers in advance of survey, while protecting the unannounced nature of every accreditation visit. DNV GL has already requested proactive status reports from our customers and will begin reaching out directly to assess each hospital’s situation and readiness for survey. We have developed a proposal for surveying remotely using secure technology similar to telehealth, and CMS has indicated their willingness to evaluate such an approach for purposes of deemed accreditation. This option would allow us to continue to assess compliance while protecting surveyors, limiting travel, and reducing disruption to hospital operations.

We are aware that other accreditation organizations have implemented a partial suspension of onsite surveys. All nationally-approved AOs across all provider types are considering this, including DNV GL Healthcare. We must meet federal requirements however, and CMS must approve any programmatic changes we make. CMS continues to prioritize infection risk as a focus for all surveys in all provider types and DNV GL will apply this focus for the duration of the current crisis. If your survey continues on schedule, your DNV GL surveyors can be an important resource for information and being a partner in reviewing your infection control practices.

The waivers announced March 13 under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act provide hospitals and critical access hospitals with significant regulatory flexibility to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. Participating hospitals may also request specific waiver flexibility by contacting their CMS Regional Office or by e-mailing 1135waiver@cms.hhs.gov with a copy to the state survey agency. More information on 1135 Waivers and how to apply is on the CMS 1135 Waivers website.

We encourage healthcare organizations to monitor the CDC, CMS QSO Policy & Memos to States and Regions, and enroll in MLN Connects for continually updated information affecting hospitals and healthcare providers.
Additional CMS Memos applicable to COVID-19 in Hospitals & Critical Access Hospitals as of 3/10/2020:

- QSO-20-13-Hospitals Considerations for Patient Triage, Placement and Hospital Discharge
- QSO-20-15-Hospital/CAH EMTALA Requirements and Implications Related to COVID-19
- QSO-20-17-ALL Guidance on PPE supply, isolation, shortages, and industrial respirators
- FAQ FAQs for State Agencies and AO COVID-19 Survey Suspension
- 1135 Waivers CMS 1135 Waivers information
- PHE.gov Public Health Emergency site from ASPR, with 1135 Waiver announcements

Any questions/ comments can be forwarded to the DNV GL Client Drop Box: DNVclientdropbox@dnvgl.com

Regards,
For DNV GL Business Assurance USA, Inc.

Patrick Horine
President

DNV GL – Business Assurance, Healthcare Accreditation Services
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