

CMS Prioritizes Immediate Jeopardy and Infection Control Surveys

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On March 23, 2020, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that during the next three weeks, State Survey Agency (SSA) and CMS surveyors will only prioritize and conduct surveys related to complaints and facility-reported incidents (FRIs) that are triaged at the Immediate Jeopardy level, in addition to an infection control review using an [Infection Control Survey Checklist developed by CMS](#) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Federal and state surveyors will also perform targeted infection control surveys of facilities areas most in need of additional oversight, as identified through collaboration with the CDC and the HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), to ensure that providers are taking appropriate steps to protect the health and safety of individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the three-week prioritization period, 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 will not be authorized.

CMS is making the Infection Control Survey Checklist available to all providers to make them aware of infection control priorities—particularly with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic. CMS expects facilities to use the Infection Control Survey Checklist, in conjunction with CDC guidance, to perform a voluntary self-assessment of their ability to meet these priorities and prevent transmission of COVID-19.

The March 23 announcement, which supersedes CMS' March 4, 2020 directive suspending all non-emergency inspections, includes additional infection control guidance for facilities aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19 and ensuring that patients are able to receive necessary services.

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