



June 2, 2021

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

On behalf of The Joint Commission, congratulations on your confirmation as the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). We welcome the leadership and health care policy expertise that you bring from your prior work at Manatt Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CMS, and Capitol Hill. The Joint Commission supports your commitment to address health care quality, affordable care, and health inequities, and stands ready to work with you.

As the nation's oldest and largest health care accrediting body, with more than a dozen programs relied upon by the federal government—many by CMS—we look forward to collaborating on quality and patient safety issues. An independent, not-for-profit organization with global reach, The Joint Commission accredits and/or certifies more than 22,000 health care organizations and programs domestically. These Joint Commission programs evaluate health care organizations across the continuum of care, including most of the nation's hospitals. Our non-hospital programs encompass clinical laboratories, ambulatory care and office-based surgery facilities, behavioral health care, home care, hospice, nursing care centers, and long-term care organizations.

The Joint Commission has a long history of working with CMS since the enactment of the Medicare statute in 1965. Our surveys done within Medicare recognized programs are relied upon by CMS as a precursor to achieving Medicare certification. We value that partnership and all opportunities to join forces on solving challenging issues. Furthermore, we have worked closely with CMS to ensure that accredited organizations deemed to meet Medicare standards continue to deliver high-quality care during the pandemic. During the Public Health Emergency, The Joint Commission developed a state-of-the-art virtual component for our surveys to ensure that we could provide basic oversight to those health care facilities delivering care in counties with COVID transmission rates unsafe for surveyor travel. We also collected data about facility performance to assure ourselves of the effectiveness of the offsite processes in evaluating the Medicare Conditions of Participation.

The process for developing accreditation standards includes a review of emerging quality and safety issues that suggest the need for additional requirements or changes to existing requirements. The standards are then prepared with input from technical advisory panels, focus groups, subject matter experts and other stakeholders, such as CMS. For example, The Joint Commission recognized the need for standards to address worsening maternal health outcomes and developed new standards intended to reduce the risk of maternal hemorrhage and severe hypertension, the two leading preventable causes of death. Our work related to maternal health is one example of how implementing evidence-based standards can help to address a critical patient safety issue. We also accredit some Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities and hope to collaborate with CMS to improve care in IHS certified hospitals.

As you embark on your new role, we are happy to serve as a resource on patient safety, health care delivery and quality of care issues. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Margaret VanAmringe, Executive Vice President for Public Policy and Government Relations. She can be reached by phone at 202-783-6655, or by email at mvanamringe@jointcommission.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Chassin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large "M" and "C".

Mark R. Chassin, M.D., FACP, M.P.P., M.P.H.
President and Chief Executive Officer