March 5, 2020

Dear AAAHC non-Medicare Deemed Status Accreditation Program Participant,

*Patient and employee safety is our first priority. It is core to the AAAHC mission and drives our actions.*

I am sending this message to inform you of a directive we’ve received that may impact the survey services AAAHC provides to your organization. Yesterday, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) directed deemed accrediting organizations to suspend all non-emergency survey inspections. While CMS is pursuing this directive to allow inspectors to focus their energies on addressing the spread of COVID-19 beginning with nursing homes and hospitals, they are extending it to all care settings.

Consistent with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) guidance, AAAHC agrees that at this time, most people in the United States will have little immediate risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus. The CDC has indicated that this virus is NOT currently spreading widely in the United States. However, this is a dynamic situation and we will continue to monitor it carefully. Please refer to the CDC link: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html)

AAAHC is committed to ensuring quality, safe patient care through accreditation. Our Surveyors serve a vital role in guiding organizations to comply with good infection prevention and control practices. For this reason and at this time, we will continue our survey activities for all organizations accredited under the AAAHC non-Medicare Deemed Status (MDS) accreditation programs.

Consistent with AAAHC Standards of compliance, all organizations across all settings should remain vigilant about practices that impact employee and patient safety and the quality of care delivered. This includes:

- Utilize AAAHC Standards (Chapters 7.I, 7.II and 8) to conduct a thorough, objective gap assessment to identify areas of risk and needed improvement.
- Develop and immediately implement a corrective action plan that prioritizes transmission-based precautions. Involve your entire staff in this process including providing education on infection prevention and control strategies.
- Leverage resources available to you (see below) to address questions, identify solutions, and provide support.
- Rigorously follow your surveillance program.
- Ensure communication with State and Local health authorities.

With our focus on ambulatory care, AAAHC believes that excellent quality infection prevention and control practices are essential to quality, safe patient and employee care, consistent with our *1095 Strong* commitment. Good practices mean full compliance with hand hygiene, effective patient pre-screening, proper use of PPE, compliance with human resource policies for employee illness, and ongoing surveillance. For additional resources, refer to the CDC links below:

- [Hand Hygiene](https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/)
- [Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators](https://www.cdc.gov/ nbrpdc/corppolicy/docs/2019-02-12_surveillance_systematic_review_020519.pdf)
AAAHC will keep you informed of any changes in our policies or operations that may be impacted by COVID-19. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to 1095 Strong, quality every day.

Regards,

Noel M. Adachi
President & CEO