



Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals

March 12, 2020

Texas Health and Human Services
Dr. Courtney N. Phillips, Executive Commissioner
Victoria Ford, Chief Policy and Regulatory Officer
Brown-Heatly Building
P.O. Box 13247
Austin, Texas 78711-3247

Dear Dr. Phillips and Ms. Ford:

I write you today on behalf of the member facilities of the Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals. Yesterday, one of our member facilities experienced a life safety code inspection. As this inspection was previously scheduled, the facility was prepared and able to devote the time and attention required. However, the life safety code inspector indicated that a clinical team would be arriving in the next several days for an unscheduled clinical licensing and/or Medicare survey.

The purpose of this correspondence is to request a temporary hold on all nonemergency survey activity until the current COVID-19 issue has abated. Many of our member facilities are currently experiencing a high-volume due to seasonal flu. In addition, their staff members have been actively involved in COVID-19 preparation for at least the last two weeks with many working long hours and weekends. One of our member facilities had two potential COVID-19 patients this week and it took over three hours and multiple staff members to process each patient. Our members are actively working with their local health departments on disaster preparedness on a daily basis. In addition, many of our small community facilities have limited staff availability even in the best of circumstances. It is critically important that our member facilities be allowed to spend their time and resources on COVID-19 response at this time, as opposed to preparing for and responding to a periodic licensure and/or Medicare survey.

Thank you for your attention to this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have questions.

Sincerely,

John Henderson
CEO, Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals

cc: Jeff Turner
CEO, Moore County Hospital District
President, Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals

Board Of Directors, Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals