August 6, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Due to the impact of the pandemic, all APA accreditation site visits scheduled to occur in-person during 2020 are postponed. This postponement provides opportunities for mitigation measures to curb community spread of COVID-19 and protect and promote health and well-being.

The APA Commission on Accreditation (CoA), with support of the APA Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation (OPCA) are working together to plan for all programs to be reviewed in a timely manner. As a first step, at its July 15-19, 2020 meeting, the CoA voted to approve the temporary implementation of virtual site visits through the end of 2020. A virtual visit will follow the same general format as an in-person visit, consisting of 2 days of interactive audio/video interviews, facility verification, and record review. It is an opportunity for programs to showcase their strengths, the site visit team to verify and confirm information provided in the self-study report, and the CoA to gain information on the program that cannot be gleaned from the written record. Each virtual site visit will be followed up with a brief in-person site visit to meet the statutory and regulatory requirements to perform regular on-site inspections (timing TBD).

Due to a variety of factors (e.g., staff resources, site visitor availability/training) the CoA has determined that only applicant programs will be scheduled for virtual site visits in 2020. While it cannot be guaranteed that every applicant program will complete a site visit prior to the end of the year; every applicant program that has already been authorized to host a site visit will be contacted by OPCA regarding its visit. Please note that programs will be contacted in the order in which they were authorized to have a visit. The OPCA will work with each program to coordinate and organize the virtual site visit.

All accredited programs with 2020 site visits that were cancelled or not yet scheduled will now have their visits in 2021. These programs remain accredited and in good standing throughout this delay. The CoA will provide an update on the status of 2021 site visits when decisions are made about their scheduling.

Site visitors participating in virtual site visits will be required to participate in an online, asynchronous training session on scheduling and conducting a virtual visit. The OPCA will also be offering (optional) live video-conferencing sessions to answer questions and familiarize visitors with the platform that is intended for use (i.e., Zoom). If you are a site visitor, you can anticipate emails from OPCA with additional information.

We greatly appreciate your flexibility and patience as we finalize the specifics and logistics associated with this unprecedented step. Please contact apasitevisit@apa.org with any immediate questions regarding the temporary implementation of virtual site visits.

Kind Regards,

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation