



August 14, 2020

Dear NAEC Center Medical Directors,

The NAEC Board and Accreditation Committee recently met to discuss NAEC's 2021 Accreditation Process, which will begin in November 2020. NAEC recognizes the continuing effects that the COVID-19 public health emergency is having on our members, many of whom have experienced closures, staff furloughs, and cancellation of elective admissions. In considering the accreditation process for 2021, the NAEC Board is striving to balance a desire to not penalize centers for circumstances beyond their control, while maintaining the minimum standards of epilepsy center accreditation and its role in ensuring high-quality and safe care is provided to epilepsy center patients. Accordingly, the NAEC Board has made the following decisions with respect to the 2021 accreditation process:

- All centers will be required to complete the Center Annual Report. We will add comment boxes to allow centers to describe how COVID has affected their 2020 activities.
- NAEC will relax all criteria that have number thresholds for all centers, such as the minimum number of admissions to epilepsy monitoring units for long-term evaluation.
- NAEC will allow flexibility in personnel requirements on a case-by-case basis for centers who have lost staff due to COVID-19 furloughs, hiring freezes and reassignments.
- Centers required to complete the full accreditation process for 2021 will still do so, including uploading de-identified patient reports for any of the procedures they performed in 2020. To provide more flexibility, centers will be able to submit de-identified EMU reports from anytime in 2020 rather than from a single month.
- All applicants, or any centers seeking to move from level 3 to 4 status, will be required to meet all criteria for their desired level with no flexibility.
- NAEC is postponing the implementation of the new criteria that were scheduled to take effect in 2021, including the requirements related to the EMU; medical director board certification; and new criteria for adult/pediatric and pediatric centers to have a pediatric epilepsy specialist and provide a video EEG report for a patient 2 years old or younger. We anticipate that these criteria will take effect in 2022 and encourage centers to make plans to meet these new standards in 2022.
- NAEC is also postponing the implementation of core criteria, which centers would be required to meet with no exception (centers would lose accreditation rather than receive conditional accreditation if they have deficiencies in these areas). We anticipate that the core criteria will take effect in 2022 and encourage centers to make plans to meet these new standards in 2022.
- Finally, NAEC is maintaining its requirement for centers to pay annual dues of \$2,000 but will consider hardship exemption on a case-by-case basis. Any Level 4 center that does not pay dues would not be included in the list of level 4 centers sent to *US News and World Report*.

Finally, NAEC will be releasing a series of short surveys about the current state of epilepsy care this fall to provide data as we begin a process to revise the NAEC Guidelines and subsequently, the accreditation criteria. Participation in these surveys is mandatory for all NAEC centers. More information will be released in the next few weeks.

NAEC is preparing a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document to provide centers with more information on the 2021 accreditation process. Please send any questions that you would like included in that document to info@naec-epilepsy.org. We will release more details prior to starting the 2021 accreditation process this November.

Thank you for continued membership in NAEC and your commitment to providing high-quality care to your patients, even despite the COVID public health emergency. Please contact NAEC with any questions at info@naec-epilepsy.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan T. Herman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Susan T. Herman, M.D.
President