



Physicians Caring for Texans

May 12, 2022

Jonathan B. Perlin  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
The Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Blvd.  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

Chiquita Brooks-LaSure  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Via: [textingorders@jointcommission.org](mailto:textingorders@jointcommission.org) and [Chiquita.Brooks-LaSure@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Chiquita.Brooks-LaSure@cms.hhs.gov)

RE: Physician Orders via Secure Text Messaging

Dear Mr. Perlin and Administrator Brooks-LaSure,

On behalf of the Texas Medical Association (TMA) and our more than 56,000 physician and medical student members, we respectfully ask The Joint Commission to reconsider its position on the use of secure text messaging for patient care orders.

The Joint Commission has on its website the following [FAQ related to secure texting of orders](#), first published Dec. 28, 2017, and updated Oct. 22, 2021:

Can secure text messaging be used to communicate patient care orders?

No. After extensive discussion weighing the pros and cons of using secure text messaging platforms to place orders, The Joint Commission and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) concluded that the use of secure text messaging for patient care orders is not permitted (see The Joint Commission's 2016 Perspectives article for additional information).

CMS reiterated their position on texting in a December 28, 2017, memorandum stating that CMS does not permit the texting of orders by physicians or other health care providers, regardless of the platform used. The information is available at the following website: [CMS: Texting of Patient Information among Healthcare Providers](#).

In its December 2016 *Perspectives* article, The Joint Commission states the following in the final paragraph:

The Joint Commission and CMS will continue to monitor advancements in the field and engage with key stakeholders to determine whether future guidance on the use of secure text messaging systems to place orders is necessary.

TMA believes the prohibition on secure texting of orders for patient care should be revisited by The Joint Commission and CMS.

The technology is now advanced, and mobile tools allow physicians to securely send an order to the nurse on duty (or other care team member) assigned to a specific patient. One example of that technology is offered by [iMobile](#). While TMA does not endorse or have a formal relationship with this company, the chair of TMA's Committee on Health Information Technology uses this technology in his hospital. The chair notes that, in his opinion, this technology fits within the workflow, is quickly accessible after hours, and is safer than calling in an order. This type of technology allows patients to receive accurate interventions more quickly when the physician is not on the premises or in close proximity and cannot access the hospital's electronic health record to place the order.

Use of secure technology to communicate orders to the care team is supported by TMA policy, which states:

265.032 Physicians Orders. The Texas Medical Association encourages facilities to allow for physician orders to be given in the most efficient manner to accommodate patient care safely and in a timely manner (Res. 417 2021).

TMA welcomes the opportunity to engage in conversation with The Joint Commission and CMS to advance our request of allowing the secure texting of orders. Any questions may be directed to Shannon Vogel at TMA by emailing [shannon.vogel@texmed.org](mailto:shannon.vogel@texmed.org) or calling (512) 370-1411.


Sincerely,



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Chair, Patient-Physician Advocacy Committee  
Texas Medical Association



Ogechika Alozie, MD, MPH  
Chair, Health Information Technology Committee  
Texas Medical Association



Gary W. Floyd, MD  
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