

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the Geriatric Surgery Verification (GSV) Program have implemented the following guidelines for conducting Virtual Site Visits while travel restrictions and social distancing protocols remain in effect.

Eligibility

1. **Verification in Good Standing-** Renewing hospitals must have verification in good standing with GSV for approval to move forward for a Virtual Site Visit. Initial hospitals will be evaluated for readiness based on their submitted Pre-Review Questionnaire (PRQ). At its discretion, ACS/GSV may refuse approval for a Virtual Site Visit for any reason.
2. **Executed Agreements-** Participating hospitals pursuing a Virtual Site Visit must fully execute all necessary legal agreements between their facility and ACS/GSV, including the GSV Participation Agreement and Business Associate and Data Use Agreement.
3. **Legal Review/Authorization-** Participating hospitals must obtain permission/approval from the facility's legal counsel or an individual with comparable authority to provide the assigned Reviewer(s) with remote/teleconference access to and/or review of patient medical records and hospital documentation if such permission/approval is deemed necessary beyond the existing agreements between the facility and ACS/GSV.
4. **Approved PRQ-** Participating hospitals must submit a complete PRQ to GSV. The PRQ must be reviewed and approved by GSV Staff in order to be eligible for a Virtual Site Visit. Please note: Additional documentation will be required beyond the usual uploaded documents normally requested when completing the PRQ. Please have all compliance documentation compiled in a digital/electronic format. Paper records cannot be reviewed during the Virtual Site Visit process.
5. **Electronic Medical Records-** The hospital must utilize an EMR system to facilitate remote/electronic review of patient charts. Direct access to the EMR is not required. The center can use presentation/screen sharing to allow the Reviewer(s) to review patient medical records.
6. **Virtual Video Conferencing Platform-** The Virtual Site Visit will be conducted using a virtual platform of the hospital's choice. The hospital must have a team member proficient with running the selected software, including switching presenters and screen sharing. The hospital must have a conference room equipped for video conferencing, including access to at least one web camera. All agenda items will be completed via virtual review by the Reviewer(s) using the designated video conferencing platform. The following features are required for any selected virtual video conferencing platform:
 - a. HIPAA-Compliant/secured connection
 - b. Video conferencing
 - c. Screen sharing
 - d. The ability to switch presenters
7. **Recommended Platforms-** The currently recommended video conferencing platforms for a Virtual Site Visit include:
 - a. Zoom
 - b. Microsoft Teams
 - c. GoToWebinar/GoToMeeting

- d. Other platforms will be approved on a case-by-case basis provided they meet all the criteria outlined in item #6 above.

Expectations and Procedures

1. After the hospital has been approved to host a Virtual Site Visit, GSV will assign Reviewer(s) to conduct the Virtual Site Visit.
2. A planning meeting between the hospital and the GSV Team will be scheduled to address common questions and concerns. The assigned Reviewer(s) and the Geriatric Surgery Director are not expected to participate in this initial planning call but are more than welcome to attend.
3. The hospital will schedule the Virtual Site Visit with the Reviewer(s) on a mutually agreeable date and time. **The scheduled site visit date must be confirmed with Kat Christensen or Mike Bencur, GSV Project Managers.** All participants must be available for the entire duration of the Virtual Site Visit. Do not book clinic time, patient appointments, surgical or interventional procedures, or other meetings/appointments during this time.
4. The hospital is responsible for scheduling, hosting, and running all technical logistics of the Virtual Site Visit.
5. The hospital's chosen conference or meeting room must be adequately equipped to host a video conference meeting. The room must be private and quiet to help facilitate a constructive and productive Virtual Site Visit. All attendees must mute/silence their phones and devices once the site visit begins. It is encouraged that participants dial-in from separate rooms in order to ensure participants can see/hear via screen sharing.
6. The GSV Geriatric Surgery Director and Coordinator must host the Virtual Site Visit via web camera. All other team members and attendees may participate via teleconference.
7. The Reviewer(s) must participate via web camera.
8. GSV Staff will participate in the Virtual Site Visit in an observational capacity only. Although GSV will assist in any way we can, the hospital is responsible for all technical logistics for organizing and running the Virtual Site Visit. **Please note that other members of the GSV Team, and other members of the ACS Quality Programs may also be present to observe the Virtual Site Visit.**
9. All participants must approach the Virtual Site Visit with the same decorum allotted to an in-person GSV Site Visit or any other formal meeting. Please be punctual, prepared, and professional.
10. Within 7 days of the scheduled Virtual Site Visit, the hospital and the Reviewer(s) are responsible for a test run of the meeting to minimize the risk of technical malfunctions on the day of the visit.

Tips for a Successful Virtual Site Visit



1. Pick a room with good lighting and acoustics



2. Silence your devices



3. Use nametags or tent cards



4. Mute non-essential attendees



5. Dial-in to the meeting

To avoid large crowds and confusion in regard to who is speaking, please have participants join the virtual visit by dialing in to the meeting rather than congregating in a central conference room.