

RCW 74.42.055 Discrimination against medicaid recipients

prohibited. (1) The purpose of this section is to prohibit discrimination against medicaid recipients by nursing homes which have contracted with the department to provide skilled or intermediate nursing care services to medicaid recipients.

(2) A nursing facility shall readmit a resident, who has been hospitalized or on therapeutic leave, immediately to the first available bed in a semiprivate room if the resident:

(a) Requires the services provided by the facility; and

(b) Is eligible for medicaid nursing facility services.

(3) It shall be unlawful for any nursing home which has a medicaid contract with the department:

(a) To require, as a condition of admission, assurance from the patient or any other person that the patient is not eligible for or will not apply for medicaid;

(b) To deny or delay admission or readmission of a person to a nursing home because of his or her status as a medicaid recipient;

(c) To transfer a patient, except from a private room to another room within the nursing home, because of his or her status as a medicaid recipient;

(d) To transfer a patient to another nursing home because of his or her status as a medicaid recipient;

(e) To discharge a patient from a nursing home because of his or her status as a medicaid recipient; or

(f) To charge any amounts in excess of the medicaid rate from the date of eligibility, except for any supplementation permitted by the department pursuant to RCW 18.51.070.

(4) Any nursing home which has a medicaid contract with the department shall maintain one list of names of persons seeking admission to the facility, which is ordered by the date of request for admission. This information shall be retained for one year from the month admission was requested. However, except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, a nursing facility is permitted to give preferential admission to individuals who seek admission from an assisted living facility, licensed under chapter 18.20 RCW, or from independent retirement housing, provided the nursing facility is owned by the same entity that owns the assisted living facility or independent housing which are located within the same proximate geographic area; and provided further, the purpose of such preferential admission is to allow continued provision of: (a) Culturally or faith-based services, or (b) services provided by a continuing care retirement community as defined in RCW 70.38.025.

(5) The department may assess monetary penalties of a civil nature, not to exceed three thousand dollars for each violation of this section.

(6) Because it is a matter of great public importance to protect senior citizens who need medicaid services from discriminatory treatment in obtaining long-term health care, any violation of this section shall be construed for purposes of the application of the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW, to constitute an unfair or deceptive act or practice or unfair method of competition in the conduct of trade or commerce.

(7) It is not an act of discrimination under this chapter to refuse to admit a patient if admitting that patient would prevent the needs of the other patients residing in that facility from being met at that facility, or if the facility's refusal is consistent with

subsection (4) of this section. [2012 c 10 s 69; 2004 c 34 s 1; 1987 c 476 s 30; 1985 c 284 s 3.]

Application—2012 c 10: See note following RCW 18.20.010.

Effective date—2004 c 34: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [March 22, 2004]." [2004 c 34 s 2.]