

**WAC 182-549-1650 Rural health clinics—Appeals related to rate setting.** (1) An RHC provider has a right to an administrative appeal of agency action related to rate setting under this chapter based on the rules in this section.

(a) The rules in WAC 182-502-0220 do not apply to appeals of agency action related to rate setting under this chapter.

(b) Appeals related to rate setting under this section are not governed by the Administrative Procedure Act, chapter 34.05 RCW.

(c) Any rate change that the agency grants that is the result of fraudulent practices on the part of the RHC, including as described under RCW 74.09.210, is exempt from the appeal provisions in this chapter.

(d) An RHC who fails to submit requested information as outlined in this chapter will be determined to have abandoned their appeal.

(2) The first level of appeal.

(a) An RHC provider who wants to contest an agency action concerning the reimbursement rate must file a written appeal with the agency. Written appeals must be sent to the address provided in the rate notification letter.

(b) The RHC must file the appeal within 60 calendar days of the date of the rate notification letter from the agency, unless an extension has been granted.

(i) The agency may grant a time extension for the appeal period if the RHC makes such a request before the expiration of the 60-day period.

(ii) The agency does not consider an appeal filed after the 60-day period unless an extension is granted by the agency.

(c) The appeal must include the following:

(i) A statement of the specific issue being appealed;

(ii) Supporting documentation; and

(iii) A request for the agency to recalculate the rate.

(d) When an RHC appeals a portion of a rate, the agency may review all components of the reimbursement rate.

(e) To complete a review of the appeal, the agency may do one or both of the following:

(i) Request additional information;

(ii) Conduct an audit of the documentation provided.

(f) The agency issues a decision or requests additional information within 60 calendar days of receiving the rate appeal request. When the agency requests additional information:

(i) The RHC has 45 calendar days from the date of the request to submit the additional information to the agency; and

(ii) The agency issues a decision within 30 calendar days of receipt of the additional information.

(g) Any rate increase or decrease resulting from an appeal is effective retroactively to the rate effective date in the notification letter. The exception is identified in (h) of this subsection.

(h) If an appeal is related to the denial of a change in scope rate adjustment application, any rate adjustment effective date is established by the following rules:

(i) For prospective change in scope, the effective date of the rate adjustment is established by WAC 182-549-1500 (2) (d);

(ii) For retrospective change in scope, the effective date of the rate adjustment is established by WAC 182-549-1500 (2) (e);

(iii) For a post change in scope of services, the effective date of the rate adjustment is established by 182-549-1500 (5) (e).

(3) The second level of appeal.

(a) When an RHC disagrees with a rate review decision from the first level of appeal, it may file a request along with supporting documentation for a dispute conference with the agency. For this section "dispute conference" means an informal administrative appeal to resolve RHC disagreements with an agency action not resolved at the first level of appeal.

(b) If an RHC files a request for a dispute conference, it must submit the request to the agency within 30 calendar days after the date of the rate review decision.

(i) Any request for a dispute conference must be sent to the address indicated in the rate review decision.

(ii) The agency does not consider dispute conference requests submitted after the 30-day period for the first level decision.

(c) The agency conducts the dispute conference within 90 calendar days of receiving the request.

(d) The agency-director designee issues the final decision within 30 calendar days of the conference. Extensions of time for extenuating circumstances may be granted by the agency-director designee.

(e) Any rate increase or decrease resulting from a dispute conference decision is effective on the date specified in the dispute conference decision.

(f) The dispute conference is the final level of administrative appeal within the agency and precedes judicial action.

(4) The agency considers an RHC who fails to attempt to resolve disputed rates as provided in this section has abandoned the dispute.

[Statutory Authority: 42 U.S.C. 1396a(bb), 42 U.S.C. 1396d (2) (A), RCW 41.05.021, and 41.05.160. WSR 22-22-049, § 182-549-1650, filed 10/27/22, effective 1/1/23.]