

**RCW 74.48.090 Quality incentive payments.** (1) The department and the department of health, in consultation with the Washington state health care association, and aging services of Washington, shall design a system of skilled nursing facility quality incentive payments. The design of the system shall be submitted to the relevant policy and fiscal committees of the legislature by January 1, 2013. For the 2011-2013 fiscal biennial budget period, the department shall not implement a system of skilled nursing facility quality incentive payments designed pursuant to this section. The system shall be based upon the following principles:

(a) Evidence-based treatment and processes shall be used to improve health care outcomes for skilled nursing facility residents;

(b) Effective purchasing strategies to improve the quality of health care services should involve the use of common quality improvement measures, while recognizing that some measures may not be appropriate for application to facilities with high bariatric, behaviorally challenged, or rehabilitation populations;

(c) Quality measures chosen for the system should be consistent with the standards that have been developed by national quality improvement organizations, such as the national quality forum, the federal centers for medicare and medicaid services, or the federal agency for healthcare research and quality. New reporting burdens to skilled nursing facilities should be minimized by giving priority to measures skilled nursing facilities that are currently required to report to governmental agencies, such as the nursing home compare measures collected by the federal centers for medicare and medicaid services;

(d) Benchmarks for each quality improvement measure should be set at levels that are feasible for skilled nursing facilities to achieve, yet represent real improvements in quality and performance for a majority of skilled nursing facilities in Washington state; and

(e) Skilled nursing facilities performance and incentive payments should be designed in a manner such that all facilities in Washington are able to receive the incentive payments if performance is at or above the benchmark score set in the system established under this section.

(2) Pursuant to an appropriation by the legislature, for state fiscal year 2014 and each fiscal year thereafter, assessments may be increased to support an additional one percent increase in skilled nursing facility reimbursement rates for facilities that meet the quality incentive benchmarks established under this section. [2012 2nd sp.s. c 7 § 921; 2011 1st sp.s. c 7 § 21.]

**Effective date—2012 2nd sp.s. c 7:** See note following RCW 2.68.020.