

**WSR 21-24-038**  
**EMERGENCY RULES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES**

[Filed November 23, 2021, 11:22 a.m., effective December 8, 2021]

Effective Date of Rule: December 8, 2021.

Purpose: The department is extending the amendment of the rules listed below to assure nursing homes are not significantly impeded from admitting and caring for residents during the COVID-19 outbreak. These amendments will continue to align state nursing home rules with federal rules that were suspended or amended to help facilitate care during the COVID-19 pandemic. The federal rules were amended to allow physicians to delegate tasks to a physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or clinical nurse specialist. Current state rules specify physicians must perform some tasks. The amendment will permit delegation of those tasks as long as the task is within the scope of practice of the delegate, and the delegate works under the supervision of the physician. The department filed a preproposal CR-101 under WSR 20-17-133. In addition, under the rule development phase of rule making, the department continues with discussions about adding language to the rules to explain the circumstances and time periods under which suspension of rules due to COVID[-19] is necessary.

Citation of Rules Affected by this Order: Amending WAC 388-97-1260.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 74.42.620.

Other Authority: Chapter 74.34 RCW.

Under RCW 34.05.350 the agency for good cause finds that immediate adoption, amendment, or repeal of a rule is necessary for the preservation of the public health, safety, or general welfare, and that observing the time requirements of notice and opportunity to comment upon adoption of a permanent rule would be contrary to the public interest.

Reasons for this Finding: The continued threat of COVID-19 to our most vulnerable populations is significant, especially for those receiving long-term care services in their homes and congregate settings, such as long-term care facilities. Current nursing home rules require physicians perform certain tasks. The rules also restrict the frequency of delegation from a physician to a registered nurse practitioner or a physician assistant, depending on the payor source of the resident and whether the bed the resident occupies is certified for medicare, medicaid, or both. The amendment permits the physician to delegate tasks, even if it is required to be performed by the physician in regulation and regardless of the frequency of the delegation. The amendment does not change the required frequency of physician visits or the requirement for the physician to supervise the delegate. This amendment aligns state rules with federally waived rules to permit increased delegation of physician tasks to a registered nurse practitioner or a physician assistant during the declared emergency. This amendment provides flexibility for physicians to better prioritize their time and will help to ensure nursing home residents receive assessment and care by a qualified health care provider in a timely manner.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Comply with Federal Statute: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Federal Rules or Standards: New 0, Amended 1, Repealed 0; or Recently Enacted State Statutes: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted at the Request of a Nongovernmental Entity: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted on the Agency's own Initiative: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Clarify, Streamline, or Reform Agency Procedures: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted using Negotiated Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Pilot Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Other Alternative Rule Making: New 0, Amended 1, Repealed 0.

Date Adopted: November 23, 2021.

Katherine I. Vasquez  
Rules Coordinator

### SHS-4803.1

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 08-20-062, filed 9/24/08, effective 11/1/08)

- WAC 388-97-1260 Physician services.** (1) The nursing home must ensure that the resident is seen by the physician whenever necessary.
- (2) Except as specified in RCW 74.42.200, a physician must personally approve in writing a recommendation that an individual be admitted to a nursing home.
- (3) The nursing home must ensure that:
- (a) Except as specified in RCW 74.42.200, the medical care of each resident is supervised by a physician;
  - (b) Another physician supervises the medical care of residents when their attending physician is unavailable; and
  - (c) Physician services are provided twenty-four hours per day, in case of emergency.
- (4) The physician must:
- (a) Write, sign and date progress notes at each visit;
  - (b) Sign and date all orders; and
  - (c) In medicare and medicare/medicaid certified facilities, review the resident's total program of care, including medications and treatments, at each federally required visit.
- (5) Except as specified in (~~subsections~~) subsection (6) (~~(7), and (9)~~) of this section, a physician may delegate tasks, including tasks that, under state law, must be performed personally by the physician, to a physician's assistant or advanced registered nurse practitioner who is:
- (a) Licensed by the state;
  - (b) Acting within the scope of practice as defined by state law;
- (~~and~~)
- (c) Under the supervision of, and working in collaboration with the physician; and
  - (d) Not an employee of the facility, if caring for a resident whose payor source is medicaid.
- (6) The physician may not delegate a task when the delegation is prohibited under state law or by the facility's own policies.
- (7) (~~If the resident's primary payor source is medicare, the physician may:~~

~~(a) Alternate federally required physician visits between personal visits by:~~

~~(i) The physician; and~~

~~(ii) An advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician's assistant; and~~

~~(b) Not delegate responsibility for the initial required physician visit. This initial visit must occur within the first thirty days of admission to the facility.~~

~~(8) If the resident's payor source is medicaid, the physician may delegate any federally required physician task, including tasks which the regulations specify must be performed personally by the physician, to a physician's assistant or advanced registered nurse practitioner who is not an employee of the facility but who is working in collaboration with a physician.~~

~~(9) If the resident's payor source is not medicare or medicaid:~~

~~(a) In the medicare only certified facility or in the medicare certified area of a medicare/medicaid facility, the physician may alternate federally required physician visits between personal visits by the physician and an advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician's assistant. The physician may not delegate responsibility for the initial required physician visit.~~

~~(b) In the medicaid only certified facility or in the medicaid certified area of a medicare/medicaid facility, the physician may delegate any federally required physician task, including tasks which the regulations specify must be performed personally by the physician, to a physician's assistant or advanced registered nurse practitioner who is not an employee of the facility but who is working in collaboration with a physician.~~

~~(10) The following table describes the physician visit requirements related to medicare or medicaid certified area and payor type.~~

	Beds in medicare only certified area	Beds in medicare/medicaid certified area	Beds in medicaid only certified area
Payor source:	Initial by physician	Initial by physician	N/A
medicare	Physician may delegate alternate visits	Physician may delegate alternate visits	
Payor source:	N/A	Delegate all tasks	Delegate all tasks
medicaid		Nonemployee	Nonemployee
Payor source:	Initial by physician	Initial by physician	Delegate all tasks
Others: such as insurance, private pay, Veteran Affairs	Physician may delegate alternate visits	Physician may delegate alternate visits	Nonemployee

~~(11)) The attending physician, or the physician-designated advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician's assistant must:~~

~~(a) Participate in the interdisciplinary plan of care process as described in WAC 388-97-1020;~~

~~(b) Provide to the resident, or where applicable the resident's surrogate decision maker, information so that the resident can make an informed consent to care or refusal of care (see WAC 388-97-0260); and~~

~~(c) Order resident self-medication when appropriate.~~

~~((12)) (8) The nursing home must obtain from the physician the following medical information before or at the time of the resident's admission:~~

~~(a) A summary or summaries of the resident's current health status, including history and physical findings reflecting a review of systems;~~

(b) Orders, as necessary for medications, treatments, diagnostic studies, specialized rehabilitative services, diet, and any restrictions related to physical mobility; and

(c) Plans for continuing care and discharge.

[Statutory Authority: Chapters 18.51 and 74.42 RCW and 42 C.F.R. 489.52. WSR 08-20-062, § 388-97-1260, filed 9/24/08, effective 11/1/08.]