CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

**ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6515**

Chapter 263, Laws of 2020

66th Legislature

2020 Regular Session

SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES--VARIOUS PROVISIONS

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 11, 2020

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| Passed by the Senate March 12, 2020  Yeas 48 Nays 0  CYRUS HABIB  **President of the Senate**  Passed by the House March 12, 2020  Yeas 97 Nays 0  LAURIE JINKINS  **Speaker of the House of Representatives** | CERTIFICATE  I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6515** as passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on the dates hereon set forth.  BRAD HENDRICKSON  Secretary |
| Approved March 31, 2020 11:25 AM | March 31, 2020 |
| JAY INSLEE  **Governor of the State of Washington** | **Secretary of State**  **State of Washington** |

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**ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6515**

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AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2020 Regular Session

**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Van De Wege, Randall, Mullet, Takko, Lovelett, Liias, Conway, Hasegawa, and Wilson, C.)

AN ACT Relating to nursing facilities; and amending RCW 18.51.091, 18.51.230, and 74.42.360.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 18.51.091 and 1987 c 476 s 24 are each amended to read as follows:

The department shall ((~~make or cause to be made at least one inspection of~~)) inspect each nursing home ((~~prior to license renewal and shall inspect community-based services as part of the licensing renewal survey~~)) periodically in accordance with federal standards under 42 C.F.R. Part 488, Subpart E. The inspection shall be made without providing advance notice of it. Every inspection may include an inspection of every part of the premises and an examination of all records, methods of administration, the general and special dietary and the stores and methods of supply. Those nursing homes that provide community-based care shall establish and maintain separate and distinct accounting and other essential records for the purpose of appropriately allocating costs of the providing of such care: PROVIDED, That such costs shall not be considered allowable costs for reimbursement purposes under chapter 74.46 RCW. Following such inspection or inspections, written notice of any violation of this law or the rules and regulations promulgated hereunder, shall be given to the applicant or licensee and the department. The notice shall describe the reasons for the facility's noncompliance. The department may prescribe by regulations that any licensee or applicant desiring to make specified types of alterations or additions to its facilities or to construct new facilities shall, before commencing such alteration, addition or new construction, submit its plans and specifications therefor to the department for preliminary inspection and approval or recommendations with respect to compliance with the regulations and standards herein authorized.

**Sec.**  RCW 18.51.230 and 1981 2nd ex.s. c 11 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

The department shall, in addition to any inspections conducted pursuant to complaints filed pursuant to RCW 18.51.190, conduct ((~~at least one general inspection prior to license renewal of all nursing homes in the state without providing advance notice of such inspection. Periodically, such inspection shall take place in part between the hours of 7 p.m. and 5 a.m. or on weekends~~)) a periodic general inspection of each nursing home in the state without providing advance notice of such inspection. Such inspections must conform to the federal standards for surveys under 42 C.F.R. Part 488, Subpart E.

**Sec.**  RCW 74.42.360 and 2019 c 12 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The facility shall have staff on duty twenty-four hours daily sufficient in number and qualifications to carry out the provisions of RCW 74.42.010 through 74.42.570 and the policies, responsibilities, and programs of the facility.

(2) The department shall institute minimum staffing standards for nursing homes. Beginning July 1, 2016, facilities must provide a minimum of 3.4 hours per resident day of direct care. Direct care staff has the same meaning as defined in RCW 74.42.010. The minimum staffing standard includes the time when such staff are providing hands-on care related to activities of daily living and nursing-related tasks, as well as care planning. The legislature intends to increase the minimum staffing standard to 4.1 hours per resident day of direct care, but the effective date of a standard higher than 3.4 hours per resident day of direct care will be identified if and only if funding is provided explicitly for an increase of the minimum staffing standard for direct care.

(a) The department shall establish in rule a system of compliance of minimum direct care staffing standards by January 1, 2016. Oversight must be done at least quarterly using the centers for medicare and medicaid services' payroll-based journal and nursing home facility census and payroll data.

(b) The department shall establish in rule by January 1, 2016, a system of financial penalties for facilities out of compliance with minimum staffing standards. No monetary penalty may be issued during the implementation period of July 1, 2016, through September 30, 2016. If a facility is found noncompliant during the implementation period, the department shall provide a written notice identifying the staffing deficiency and require the facility to provide a sufficiently detailed correction plan to meet the statutory minimum staffing levels. Monetary penalties begin October 1, 2016. Monetary penalties must be established based on a formula that calculates the cost of wages and benefits for the missing staff hours. If a facility meets the requirements in subsection (3) or (4) of this section, the penalty amount must be based solely on the wages and benefits of certified nurse aides. The first monetary penalty for noncompliance must be at a lower amount than subsequent findings of noncompliance. Monetary penalties established by the department may not exceed two hundred percent of the wage and benefit costs that would have otherwise been expended to achieve the required staffing minimum hours per resident day for the quarter. A facility found out of compliance must be assessed a monetary penalty at the lowest penalty level if the facility has met or exceeded the requirements in subsection (2) of this section for three or more consecutive years. Beginning July 1, 2016, pursuant to rules established by the department, funds that are received from financial penalties must be used for technical assistance, specialized training, or an increase to the quality enhancement established in RCW 74.46.561.

(c) The department shall establish in rule an exception allowing geriatric behavioral health workers as defined in RCW 74.42.010 to be recognized in the minimum staffing requirements as part of the direct care service delivery to individuals who have a behavioral health condition. Hours worked by geriatric behavioral health workers may be recognized as direct care hours for purposes of the minimum staffing requirements only up to a portion of the total hours equal to the proportion of resident days of clients with a behavioral health condition identified at that facility on the most recent semiannual minimum data set. In order to qualify for the exception:

(i) The worker must:

(A) Have a bachelor's or master's degree in social work, behavioral health, or other related areas; or

(B) Have at least three years experience providing care for individuals with chronic mental health issues, dementia, or intellectual and developmental disabilities in a long-term care or behavioral health care setting; or

(C) Have successfully completed a facility-based behavioral health curriculum approved by the department under RCW 74.39A.078;

(ii) Any geriatric behavioral health worker holding less than a master's degree in social work must be directly supervised by an employee who has a master's degree in social work or a registered nurse.

(d)(i) The department shall establish a limited exception to the 3.4 hours per resident day staffing requirement for facilities demonstrating a good faith effort to hire and retain staff.

(ii) To determine initial facility eligibility for exception consideration, the department shall send surveys to facilities anticipated to be below, at, or slightly above the 3.4 hours per resident day requirement. These surveys must measure the hours per resident day in a manner as similar as possible to the centers for medicare and medicaid services' payroll-based journal and cover the staffing of a facility from October through December of 2015, January through March of 2016, and April through June of 2016. A facility must be below the 3.4 staffing standard on all three surveys to be eligible for exception consideration. If the staffing hours per resident day for a facility declines from any quarter to another during the survey period, the facility must provide sufficient information to the department to allow the department to determine if the staffing decrease was deliberate or a result of neglect, which is the lack of evidence demonstrating the facility's efforts to maintain or improve its staffing ratio. The burden of proof is on the facility and the determination of whether or not the decrease was deliberate or due to neglect is entirely at the discretion of the department. If the department determines a facility's decline was deliberate or due to neglect, that facility is not eligible for an exception consideration.

(iii) To determine eligibility for exception approval, the department shall review the plan of correction submitted by the facility. Before a facility's exception may be renewed, the department must determine that sufficient progress is being made towards reaching the 3.4 hours per resident day staffing requirement. When reviewing whether to grant or renew an exception, the department must consider factors including but not limited to: Financial incentives offered by the facilities such as recruitment bonuses and other incentives; the robustness of the recruitment process; county employment data; specific steps the facility has undertaken to improve retention; improvements in the staffing ratio compared to the baseline established in the surveys and whether this trend is continuing; and compliance with the process of submitting staffing data, adherence to the plan of correction, and any progress toward meeting this plan, as determined by the department.

(iv) Only facilities that have their direct care component rate increase capped according to RCW 74.46.561 are eligible for exception consideration. Facilities that will have their direct care component rate increase capped for one or two years are eligible for exception consideration through June 30, 2017. Facilities that will have their direct care component rate increase capped for three years are eligible for exception consideration through June 30, 2018.

(v) The department may not grant or renew a facility's exception if the facility meets the 3.4 hours per resident day staffing requirement and subsequently drops below the 3.4 hours per resident day staffing requirement.

(vi) The department may grant exceptions for a six-month period per exception. The department's authority to grant exceptions to the 3.4 hours per resident day staffing requirement expires June 30, 2018.

(3)(a) Large nonessential community providers must have a registered nurse on duty directly supervising resident care twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week.

(b)(i) The department shall establish a limited exception process ((~~to facilities~~)) for large nonessential community providers that can demonstrate a good faith effort to hire a registered nurse for the last eight hours of required coverage per day. In granting an exception, the department may consider the competitiveness of the wages and benefits offered as compared to nursing facilities in comparable geographic or metropolitan areas within Washington state, the provider's recruitment and retention efforts, and the availability of registered nurses in the particular geographic area. A one-year exception may be granted and may be renewable ((~~for up to three consecutive years~~)); however, the department may limit the admission of new residents, based on medical conditions or complexities, when a registered nurse is not on-site and readily available. If a ((~~facility~~)) large nonessential community provider receives an ((~~exemption~~)) exception, that information must be included in the department's nursing home locator. ((~~After June 30, 2019~~))

(ii) By August 1, 2023, and every three years thereafter, the department, along with a stakeholder work group established by the department, shall conduct a review of the exceptions process to determine if it is still necessary. As part of this review, the department shall provide the legislature with a report that includes enforcement and citation data for large nonessential community providers that were granted an exception in the three previous fiscal years in comparison to those without an exception. The report must include a similar comparison of data, provided to the department by the long-term care ombuds, on long-term care ombuds referrals for large nonessential community providers that were granted an exception in the three previous fiscal years and those without an exception. This report, along with a recommendation as to whether the exceptions process should continue, is due to the legislature by December 1st of each year in which a review is conducted. Based on the recommendations outlined in this report, the legislature may take action to end the exceptions process.

(4) Essential community providers and small nonessential community providers must have a registered nurse on duty directly supervising resident care a minimum of sixteen hours per day, seven days per week, and a registered nurse or a licensed practical nurse on duty directly supervising resident care the remaining eight hours per day, seven days per week.

(5) For the purposes of this section, "behavioral health condition" means one or more of the behavioral symptoms specified in section E of the minimum data set.

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Passed by the Senate March 12, 2020.

Passed by the House March 12, 2020.

Approved by the Governor March 31, 2020.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State March 31, 2020.