

**RCW 74.09.611 Hospital quality incentive payments—Noncritical access hospitals.** (1) If sufficient funds are made available as provided in subsection (2) of this section the authority, in collaboration with the Washington state hospital association, shall design a system of hospital quality incentive payments for noncritical access hospitals. The system must be based upon the following principles:

(a) Evidence-based treatment and processes must be used to improve health care outcomes for hospital patients;

(b) Effective purchasing strategies to improve the quality of health care services should involve the use of common quality improvement measures by public and private health care purchasers, while recognizing that some measures may not be appropriate for application to specialty pediatric, psychiatric, or rehabilitation hospitals;

(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 hospitals should be minimized by giving priority to measures hospitals are currently required to report to governmental agencies, such as the hospital 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 hospitals to achieve, yet represent real improvements in quality and performance for a majority of hospitals in Washington state; and

(e) Hospital performance and incentive payments should be designed in a manner such that all noncritical access hospitals 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) If hospital safety net assessment funds under RCW 74.60.020 are made available, such funds must be used to support an additional one percent increase in inpatient hospital rates for noncritical access hospitals that:

(a) Meet the quality incentive benchmarks established under this section; and

(b) Participate in Washington state hospital association collaboratives related to the benchmarks in order to improve care and promote sharing of best practices with other hospitals.

(3) Funds directed from any other lawful source may also be used to support the purposes of this section. [2013 2nd sp.s. c 17 § 18.]

**Effective date—2013 2nd sp.s. c 17:** See note following RCW 74.60.005.