WSR 26-19-015
PREPROPOSAL STATEMENT OF INQUIRY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

[Filed September 4, 2026, 7:44 a.m.]

Subject of Possible Rule Making: Allowing nonverified ambulance services to provide interfacility transportation of trauma patients. The department of health (department) is considering amending WAC 246-976-890 in response to multiple rule-making petitions to allow licensed emergency medical services ambulance services who do not hold a trauma verification to conduct interfacility transports of trauma patients.

Statutes Authorizing the Agency to Adopt Rules on this Subject: RCW 18.73.081 and 43.70.040.

Reasons Why Rules on this Subject may be Needed and What They Might Accomplish: Current language in WAC 246-976-890 requires hospitals to use trauma verified ambulance services to transport trauma patients between trauma facilities. Ambulance service capabilities have evolved since the inception of the original requirement and training, staffing, and equipment standards for both licensed nonverified and trauma verified ambulance services are currently the same. The department will consider amendments to allow licensed ambulance services who do not hold trauma verification to provide interfacility transportation of trauma patients. These changes could increase access to critical interfacility transportation services for patients and communities across Washington state.

Rule making is required to update the hospital interfacility transport guidelines to align with current standards for licensed and verified ambulance services.

Other federal and state agencies that regulate this subject and the process coordinating the rule with these agencies: None.

Process for Developing New Rule: Collaborative rule making.

Interested parties can participate in the decision to adopt the new rule and formulation of the proposed rule before publication by contacting Dawn Felt, P.O. Box 47853, Olympia, [WA] 98504-7853, phone 360-236-2842, fax 360-236-2830, TTY 360-833-6388 or 711, email dawn.felt@doh.wa.gov, website https://doh.wa.gov; or Jason Norris, P.O. Box 47853, Olympia, [WA] 98504, phone 360-236-2851, fax 360-236-2830, TTY 360-833-6388 or 711, email jason.norris@doh.wa.gov, website https://doh.wa.gov.

Additional comments: Interested parties can participate in the drafting of the proposed rules. The department will conduct a series of rules workshops. Rule-making notices will be delivered via email notifications. To receive notices, go to https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADOH/subscriber/new. After signing in, click open the box labeled "Health Systems Quality Assurance." Next, click open the box labeled "Community Health Systems" and then click open the box labeled "Emergency Medical Services and Trauma." Finally, click the box for "Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Rule Making Chapter WAC 246.976." You may also check the box next to one or more of the other professions or facilities listed to receive information related to that specific topic.

September 3, 2026
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