STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Home and Community Living Administration
Residential Care Services • P.O. Box 45600 • Olympia, Washington 98504

August 3, 2026

HCLA: NH #2026-028
CMS Released QSO-26-14-NH, Nursing Home (NH) Risk-Based Survey (RBS) National Implementation

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

We are writing to inform you of new guidance issued by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding annual recertification inspections.

Beginning September 8, 2026, CMS will launch the NH RBS, a streamlined, abbreviated version of the traditional Long-Term Care Survey Process (LTCSP) designed to maximize regulatory efficiency while maintaining oversight of resident safety. Tested in a 2023 pilot across 22 states and over 100 facilities, the NH RBS effectively identifies noncompliance and resident health risks while cutting overall onsite inspection time roughly in half.

Approximately 12% of U.S. NHs qualify for the new NH RBS process based on specific criteria. This targeted approach enables state agencies to reallocate resources to address complaint backlogs and investigate higher-risk care environments. To help facilities track eligibility and understand public reporting updates under this new initiative, CMS has outlined the following roll-out details:

- CMS will make the list of qualifying NHs publicly available beginning **September 30, 2026**.
- The list will be available on the CMS Provider Data Catalog and the Nursing Home Care Compare website. It will be updated by CMS on a regular basis.
- The State Survey Agency (SA) retains full authority to revert to the traditional LTCSP at any time if complaint reports or safety concerns arise.
- Please be advised that the presence of an icon on your facility's profile page on the NH Care Compare website **does not mean** your facility will automatically be included on the qualifying RBS list. Inclusion is determined by the specific selection criteria established by CMS.

Official CMS guidance is outlined in QSO-26-14-NH, which provides a comprehensive overview of the new RBS process, selection criteria, and state mandates. The *RBS Procedure Guide* and related survey documents will be uploaded to the CMS Survey Resources folder. These documents can be accessed by visiting Nursing Homes | CMS.

As always, thank you for the care you provide to the vulnerable adults in your community. If you have any questions, please contact the Policy Unit at rcspolicy@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Miriam Mina, Acting Director
Residential Care Services

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