



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

July 29, 2021

AL TSA: AFH #2021-043
AL TSA: ALF #2021-042
AL TSA: ESF #2021-037
AL TSA: CCRSS #2021-038
EMERGENCY RULES SUSPENDING TB TESTING

Dear Administrator / Provider:

The Department of Social and Health Services has filed [CR-103E \(WSR 21-15-113\)](#) emergency rules for tuberculosis (TB) testing requirements for long-term care workers. The new emergency rules continue the suspension of requirements related to TB testing in WACs. These rules are suspended in response to the significant threat of COVID-19 to our most vulnerable populations, especially for those receiving long-term care services in their homes and congregate settings, such as long-term care facilities. This will be the final extension. Providers are encouraged to start TB testing now to assure that staff testing is brought up to date by the end of this emergency rule. This rule-filing extends the emergency rule until November 18, 2021.

Clinics providing TB testing continue to be short of staff and have limited availability throughout the state due to the COVID-19 outbreak. These clinics are unable to provide the TB testing required as a part of the hiring process in many long-term care programs. These emergency rules are intended to help meet the demand for long-term care workers in Washington State.

Additionally, a [CR-101 \(WSR 20-16-069\)](#) was filed with Office of the Code Reviser on July 29, 2020 to begin the rule-making process establishing a timeframe when long-term care facility employees and residential service and support provider employees were not required to be screened for tuberculosis under the rules suspended or waived during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ongoing communication with stakeholders indicates a continuance of these suspended rules is needed as the COVID pandemic is still impacting the ability of long-term care facilities to meet these requirements. While vaccinations are beginning to be distributed, the program is still in its infancy stage and has not yet improved staffing needs in long-term care facilities.

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions, please contact your local RCS Field Manager.

Sincerely,

Mike Anbesse, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"