



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
*Aging and Long-Term Support Administration*  
*PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-560*

September 2, 2021

ALTSA: AFH #2021-047  
ALTSA: ALF #2021-047  
ALTSA: CCRSS #2021-042  
ALTSA: ICF/IID #2021-038  
ALTSA: ESF #2021-041  
ALTSA: NH #2021-063

**RAPID RESPONSE TEAM 2 SHORT-TERM STAFFING**

Dear Provider/Administrator/Superintendent:

The Department of Social and Health Services, Aging and Long-Term Support Administration has contracted with a temporary nurse staffing agency to provide Rapid Response Staffing teams located in multiple geographic areas across the state. The intent of establishing these teams is to provide **short-term staffing support to providers who participate in incentive program to admit patients from acute care hospitals.**

The Rapid Response Teams will be comprised of RNs, LPNs, and CNAs and located in counties/cities with the highest need for providers expediting patient discharges to residential care settings. In the event data shows a need for an additional Rapid Response Team in an area or in other areas, these teams may be relocated to respond to the need. As with former Rapid Response Teams, deployed staff and teams have undergone screening to qualify for deployment in residential care settings.

Department funding comes from the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. **There will be *no charge* to the facilities or agencies for use of short-term nursing staff support through this program.**

Effective immediately, providers can request short term staffing support by completing a [Rapid Response Request form](#) (DSHS 02-716) and submitting to the Department through mailbox at [rapidresponse@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:rapidresponse@dshs.wa.gov). Rapid Response Team 2 Management will screen requests based on three priorities:

- **Priority 1** is patient admissions from acute care hospitals to offload discharges and supporting providers participating in the ALTSA incentive program.
- **Priority 2** is staffing homes with a certain % of COVID-19 cases.
- **Priority 3** is for other urgent staffing needs to meet resident care and service delivery. Screening will be in order of prioritization.

Rapid Response Managers will contact providers to discuss requests, staff availability, need, and assignments. They will confirm what amount of staff resource is available and when. Contacts will be made in 24 hrs. DSHS will work with Rapid Response Managers to triage requests based on prioritization. The Managers will exchange staffing contact and agency contact information and instructions for assigned staff. If there are multiple staffing requests that need to be filled at the same time, providers will coordinate those requests with the Managers. Resources deployed will be based on need regionally and statewide.

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Please work with your staff to be prepared to orient the Rapid Response Teams to your facility, home, agency and residents and clients. These staff are accustomed to responding to temporary assignments. They will need orientation to facility, home, and agency operations on arrival, including medication administration systems, personal care or behavioral health care needs of the residents or clients, emergency response and contact information, and other vital information.

If providers do not have adequate PPE to provide to the deployed staff, they will be bring PPE kits, including fit tested N95 respirators. Direct any concerns about equipment, staff, and assignments to the Rapid Response Team Managers.

We know that the COVID-19 outbreak continues to have significant impacts on facilities, homes, agencies as well as hospitals. We appreciate your willingness to partner and collaborate to create hospital capacity to serve citizens who need acute care, an emergent need in our state. For Rapid Response Team staffing questions, please contact Bett Schlemmer at [bett.schlemmer@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:bett.schlemmer@dshs.wa.gov) or 360.725.2404.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Anbesse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "M" and "A".

Mike Anbesse, Director  
Residential Care Services

*DSHS: "Transforming Lives"*