



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

February 22, 2024

ALTSA: AFH #2024-006
ALTSA: ALF #2024-005
ALTSA: CCRSS #2024-003
ALTSA: ESF #2024-005
ALTSA: ICF/IID #2024-003
ALTSA: NH #2024-006

RAPID RESPONSE TEAMS UNWINDING IN LONG-TERM CARE SETTINGS

Dear Administrator/Provider/Superintendent:

The Department of Social and Health Services, Aging and Long-Term Support Administration contracted with a temporary nurse staffing agency to provide Rapid Response Staffing teams located in multiple geographic areas across the state. This temporary direct care staffing support is ending May 31, 2024.

Until May 31, 2024, the Rapid Response Teams will be comprised of LPNs, and CNAs and located in counties/cities with the highest need for providers expediting patient discharges to residential care settings.

What's next?

Until May 15, 2024, providers can make their requests for short-term staffing support by completing a [Rapid Response Request](#) form (DSHS 02-716) and submitting it to the Department through the mailbox rapidresponse@dshs.wa.gov. Rapid Response Team 2 Management will continue to screen your requests based on three priorities (that have been updated):

- **Priority 1** is patient admissions from acute care hospitals to offload discharges and support providers.
- **Priority 2** is long-term care settings with seasonal outbreaks, e.g., COVID-19, RSV, Flu, or Norovirus + cases that require increased staffing to provide adequate care.
- **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 still contact providers to discuss requests, staff availability, need, and assignments through May 31, 2024. They will confirm the amount of staff resource available. 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.

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.

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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.

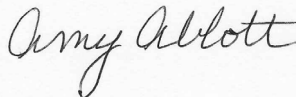
After May 31, 2024, licensed long-term care settings with direct care staffing needs can access short term support through the Nursing Pool resource available on the Department of Health website. This information can be found at [Facility Search \(wa.gov\)](#) and selecting Nursing Pool Registration.

We have appreciated your willingness to partner and collaborate with ALTSA to create hospital capacity to serve citizens who need post-acute care.

We additionally wish to thank our contracted Rapid Response Teams for the relentless pursuit of quality service to assist Washingtonians.

For additional information regarding this Unwinding of Rapid Response Team or staffing questions, please contact Bett Schlemmer at bett.schlemmer@dshs.wa.gov or 360.725.2404.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light gray rectangular background.

Amy Abbott, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: *"Transforming Lives"*