



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

August 9, 2016

**AL TSA: NH #2016-023**  
**EXCEPTION TO 24 HOUR R.N. STAFFING REQUIREMENT**

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator

In 2015, SHB 1274 passed into law requiring that all large, nonessential nursing homes (NHs) will have 24-hour RN coverage. In the 2016 legislative session, Substitute House Bill 2678 became law and added exceptions to the RN staffing requirements. In June of 2016, Residential Care Services (RCS) notified all NHs that effective July 1, 2016 RCS staff will cite any facility found to be out of compliance with the 24 hour RN requirement.

Residential Care Services (RCS) has now implemented a process for a NH to request an exception to the 24 hour RN requirement, as follows:

- All exceptions should include a letter outlining the reason for the request, along with any available supporting documentation (recruitment flyers, job advertisements, any incentives or bonuses the facility may offer, etc.). Please also provide any documentation outlining the amount of time the facility has been working to recruit RNs without success.
- All exception requests must be sent addressed to the RCS director at:  
Candace Goehring, Director  
Residential Care Services  
Aging and Long-term Support Administration  
P.O. Box 45600  
Olympia, WA 98504-5600

Exception requests will be reviewed every other week by a committee of RCS personnel and approval/denial letters will be mailed within 48 hours of review. All approved exceptions will be valid for one year. It is the facility's responsibility to keep track of when the approved exception expires. If a facility wishes to extend an exception, a new request and current supporting documentation will need to be submitted for review and approval prior to the expiration of the previous one. The exceptions can be renewed for up to three consecutive years.

Please keep in mind, if a registered nurse is not on-site and readily available to complete full assessments during a shift, the department may limit the admission of new residents (based on the resident's medical conditions or complexity) during this period for the particular shift that a RN is not on-site or readily available.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the health and safety of nursing home residents. If you have any questions, please contact your local RCS Field Manager.

Sincerely,

Candace Goehring, Director  
Residential Care Services

*"Transforming Lives"*