



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

September 18, 2018

AL TSA: NH #2018-022
QSO 17-30 - REVISED 07.06.2018 CLARIFYING REQUIREMENTS TO REDUCE
LEGIONELLA RISK IN HEALTHCARE FACILITY WATER SYSTEMS

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

CMS has reissued QSO Memo 17-30, clarifying the expectations for providers and surveyors around healthcare facility water management plans. This letter supersedes previous department issuances AL TSA: NH #2017-005 and AL TSA: NH #2017-017.

Legionella Infections: The bacterium *Legionella* can cause a serious type of pneumonia in persons at risk. Outbreaks have been linked to poorly maintained water systems in buildings with large or complex water systems including long-term care facilities. Transmission can occur via aerosols from devices such as showerheads, cooling towers, hot tubs, and decorative fountains.

Facility Requirements to Prevent Legionella Infections: Facilities must develop and adhere to policies and procedures that inhibit microbial growth in building water systems, and reduce the risk of growth and spread of legionella and other opportunistic pathogens in water. The water management plans and documentation must, at a minimum, ensure each facility:

- Conducts a facility risk assessment to identify where Legionella and other opportunistic waterborne pathogens could grow and spread in the facility water system.
- Develops and implements a water management program that considers the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) industry standard and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) toolkit.
- Specifies testing protocols and acceptable ranges for control measures, and document the results of testing and corrective actions taken when control limits are not maintained.
- Maintains compliance with other applicable Federal, State and local requirements.

Note: **CMS does not require water cultures for Legionella or other opportunistic water borne pathogens.** Testing protocols are at the discretion of the provider.

Resources: The [CDC Toolkit](#) contains information on developing a water management plan and suggested testing and control options. Additional information and the QSO memo can be found at: [QSO-17-30-Hospital/CAH/NH](#).

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

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