January 26, 2021

ALTSA: NH #2021-006

EMERGENCY RULES (CR-103E) AMENDING WAC 388-97-1380 AND 388-97-1580, RELATED TO TUBERCULOSIS TESTING IN NURSING HOMES

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

The Department of Social and Health Services (department) filed emergency rules (WSR 21-04-020) related to tuberculosis (TB) testing in nursing homes. The rules are effective January 25, 2021 and expire May 25, 2021. The department amended the rules in response to recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions (CDC) about co-administration of TB testing products and the COVID-19 vaccine.

The following rules are amended:
- WAC 388-97-1380 is amended to permit deferring TB testing in some circumstances if, after weighing the risks and benefits, administration of the COVID-19 vaccine prior to TB testing is determined to be the best course of action. If TB testing is deferred,
    - The employee or resident must be assessed for signs and symptoms of TB within three days of admission or employment; and
    - TB testing must be completed as soon as permitted by the CDC recommendations.
- WAC 388-97-1580 is amended to require documentation of the rationale for deferring TB testing, if it is deferred, and to document the symptom assessment.

The adoption of the rules allows facilities to adhere to CDC COVID-19 vaccination and complete TB testing. Please see Dear Nursing Home Administrator letter 021-002 for more information. The CDC COVID-19 vaccine recommendations are here: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html.

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Herke, Nursing Home Policy Program Manager, at (509) 209-3088.

Sincerely,

Candace Goehring, Director
Residential Care Services

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