



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

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ALTSA: NH #2022-002

**CENTER FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES (CMS) MAKES CHANGES
TO COVID-19 SURVEY ACTIVITIES AND INCREASED OVERSIGHT IN NURSING HOMES**

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

Throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency, CMS has remained vigilant in assessing the needs of Medicare/Medicaid beneficiaries, healthcare providers/suppliers, and the State Survey Agencies (the Department of Social and Health Services or DSHS). In an effort to control the spread of COVID-19, CMS developed Focused Infection Control (FIC) survey and limited onsite surveys and activities. In addition, CMS issued [blanket waivers](#) for healthcare providers. On [November 4, 2021](#), CMS also announced the requirement that all NH staff be vaccinated against COVID-19 as a requirement for participating in Medicare and Medicaid-certified providers and suppliers.

On November 12, 2021, CMS released [QSO-22-02-ALL](#), which announced changes made to COVID-19 survey activities and increased oversight in nursing homes. Such changes include:

- **Focused Infection Control (FIC) surveys:** Conduct annually and as concerns arise with the managing COVID-19, or infection control practices.
- **Resuming standard recertification surveys:**
 - DSHS will resume the normal schedule moving forward;
 - DSHS will prioritize surveys and compliance investigations according to potential risks; and
 - CMS will temporarily allow certain mandatory tasks to be discretionary or triggered based on offsite and/or onsite survey activities. The mandatory survey tasks that may be discretionary are:
 - Resident Council Meeting
 - Dining Observation Task
 - Medication Storage
- **Increasing oversight in nursing homes:** CMS is concerned about how residents' health and safety has been impacted during the COVID-19 public health emergency as state agencies have been unable to have the traditional level of visibility inside the nursing home. Such activities include surveying for:
 - Nurse competency;
 - Inappropriate use of antipsychotic medications; and
 - Other concerns (i.e. unplanned weight loss, loss of function/mobility, depression, abuse/neglect, pressure ulcers).

If you have any questions, please contact Molly McClintock, Policy Program Manager, at (360) 742-6966 or molly.mcclintock@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

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For Mike Anbesse, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"