



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

January 14, 2022

**Amended February 10, 2022**

**AL TSA: NH #2022-008**  
**NURSING FACILITY SUPPORT FOR HOSPITAL DISCHARGES**

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

**This letter is amended to reflect the Hospital Capacity Admission Unit directory.**

With COVID-19 cases rising due to the transmissibility of the Omicron variant, hospitals are seeing a dramatic increase in COVID hospitalizations. The health care staffing shortages have led hospitals to be at or over their capacity to treat patients. Governor Jay Inslee [announced January 13, 2022](#) that the state will be taking a number of actions to help alleviate the staffing crisis in hospitals.

Some of the actions to help support hospitals include deploying the Washington State National Guard, putting a pause on non-urgent medical procedures, additional efforts to discharge patients into long-term care facilities, and additional resources for healthcare workers.

The top priority of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (AL TSA) is continuing to work with patients who no longer have a need for acute care in a hospital setting and supporting their transition to alternative settings, such as nursing facilities, when medically appropriate. However, our state's long-term care providers are experiencing shortages in staffing, which curtails their ability to admit individuals from acute care hospitals. This delay in discharge contributes to the overall strain in our hospitals, and additional steps are necessary to help support the transition of individuals in need of long-term services and supports through the systems of care.

**Hospital Capacity Admission Units**

Beginning February 2022, DSHS has contracted with nursing facilities statewide to establish dedicated units to admit acute hospital patients through June 30, 2022. The goal of establishing these units is to create additional bed capacity of approximately 240 to expedite transition of patients from acute care settings to a skilled nursing setting where they can receive appropriate care to support their rehabilitation and post-acute care needs.

The Department has contracted with a temporary nurse staffing agency to staff these dedicated units 24/7. Each nursing service team will be comprised of RNs, LPNs, and CNAs and will be located in counties/cities with the highest need for providers expediting new resident admissions from hospitals. These DSHS contracted staff units will be available through June 30, 2022. Because DSHS will be paying for staffing of these beds, admissions to these beds will not be eligible for the \$6,000 admission incentive.

Facilities who are admitting patients from acute care hospitals should not decrease their capacity elsewhere in their facility for admissions; and these dedicated staff may not be used elsewhere in the facility. It is expected that individuals who admit to these DSHS contracted staff units will transition to the community or, move to the general population of the center as beds and staffing increase and become available.

To expedite transitions, individuals transitioning to these specialty units will not be assessed by Home and Community Services (HCS) prior to admission, the Department will ensure that assessment and transition planning is done in the SNF upon admission, to facilitate timely transition to the community as agreed to by the resident.

Nursing Facilities contracted with HCS and opening a Hospital Capacity Admission Unit will provide the following:

1. Certified Nursing Facility beds solely dedicated to treat patients who are ready to transition directly from Acute Care Hospitals.
2. Provide orientation to the facility physical plant and operations on arrival, including medication administration systems, electronic medical records, emergency response plans and other vital information.
3. Coordinate with any concerns about equipment, staff and assignments of the DSHS Nursing Service team to the DSHS Nursing Team Manager.
4. Contractor shall only admit patients from acute care hospitals to the hospital capacity admission unit of the nursing facility staffed by DSHS contracted staff.

The Department has considered a number of factors when determining Hospital Capacity Admission Unit contracts including, geographic distribution and need, history of regulatory compliance and speed at which the unit can be made available. The directory of the Hospital Capacity Admission units can be found at [COVID-19 Information for Providers and Long-Term Care Professionals | DSHS \(wa.gov\)](https://www.dshs.wa.gov/COVID-19/COVID-19-Information-for-Providers-and-Long-Term-Care-Professionals)

If you contract or programmatic questions regarding the Hospital Capacity Admission Units, please contact Julie Cope at [Julie.Cope@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Julie.Cope@dshs.wa.gov) or Stephanie VanPelt at [Stephanie.VanPelt@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Stephanie.VanPelt@dshs.wa.gov).

We know COVID-19 continues to have significant impacts on LTC facilities, providers, and agencies. We appreciate your willingness to partner and collaborate to create hospital capacity to serve citizens who need acute care, an emergent need in our state, as well as citizens who need post-acute rehabilitation and service.

Sincerely,



Mike Anbesse, Director  
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"



Bea Rector, Director  
Home and Community Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"