

WAC 388-97-0120 Individual transfer and discharge rights and procedures. The department amended or repealed portions of this section to help facilitate care to align state nursing home rules with federal rules that were amended or suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic from April 13, 2020, through May 23, 2023, in response to the state of emergency. For requirements in place during that time, see WAC 388-97-01201.

(1) The skilled nursing facility and nursing facility must comply with all of the requirements of 42 C.F.R. § 483.10 and § 483.12, and RCW 74.42.450, or successor laws, and the nursing home must comply with all of the requirements of RCW 74.42.450 (1) through (4) and (7), or successor laws, including the following provisions and must not transfer or discharge any resident unless:

(a) At the resident's request;

(b) The transfer or discharge is necessary for the resident's welfare and the resident's needs cannot be met in the facility;

(c) The transfer or discharge is appropriate because the resident's health has improved enough so the resident no longer needs the services provided by the facility;

(d) The safety of individuals in the facility is endangered;

(e) The health of individuals in the facility would otherwise be endangered; or

(f) The resident has failed, after reasonable and appropriate notice, to pay for a stay at the facility.

(2) The following notice requirements apply if a nursing home/facility initiates the transfer or discharge of a resident. The notice must:

(a) Include all information required by 42 C.F.R. § 483.12 when given in a nursing facility;

(b) Be in writing, in language the resident understands;

(c) Be given to the resident, the resident's surrogate decision maker, if any, the resident's family, and to the department;

(d) Be provided 30 days in advance of a transfer or discharge initiated by the nursing facility, except that the notice may be given as soon as practicable when the facility cannot meet the resident's urgent medical needs, or under the conditions described in (1)(c), (d), and (e) of this section; and

(e) Be provided 15 days in advance of a transfer or discharge initiated by the nursing home, unless the transfer is an emergency.

(3) The nursing home must:

(a) Provide sufficient preparation and orientation to the resident to ensure safe and orderly transfer or discharge from the nursing home;

(b) Attempt to avoid the transfer or discharge of a resident from the nursing home through the use of reasonable accommodations unless agreed to by the resident and the requirements of WAC 388-97-0080 are met; and

(c) Develop and implement a bed-hold policy. This policy must be consistent with any bed-hold policy that the department develops.

(4) The nursing home must provide the bed-hold policy, in written format, to the resident, and a family member, before the resident is transferred or goes on therapeutic leave. At a minimum the policy must state:

(a) The number of days, if any, the nursing home will hold a resident's bed pending return from hospitalization or social/therapeutic leave;

(b) That a medicaid eligible resident, whose hospitalization or social/therapeutic leave exceeds the maximum number of bed-hold days will be readmitted to the first available semi-private bed, provided the resident needs nursing facility services. Social/therapeutic leave is defined under WAC 388-97-0001. The number of days of social/therapeutic leave allowed for medicaid residents and the authorization process is found under WAC 388-97-0160; and

(c) That a medicaid eligible resident may be charged if they request that a specific bed be held, but may not be charged a bed-hold fee for the right to return to the first available bed in a semi-private room.

(5) The nursing facility must send a copy of the federally required transfer or discharge notice to:

(a) The department's home and community services when the nursing home has determined under WAC 388-97-0100, that the medicaid resident's health has improved sufficiently so that the resident no longer needs the services provided by the facility; and

(b) The department's designated local office when the transfer or discharge is for any of the following reasons:

(i) The resident's needs cannot be met in the facility;

(ii) The health or safety of individuals in the facility is endangered; or

(iii) The resident has failed to pay for, or to have paid under medicare or medicaid, a stay at the facility.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.42.620. WSR 26-08-015, s 388-97-0120, filed 3/20/26, effective 4/20/26. Statutory Authority: Chapters 18.51 and 74.42 RCW and 42 C.F.R. 489.52. WSR 08-20-062, § 388-97-0120, filed 9/24/08, effective 11/1/08.]