



Protect Patient Safety & Access: Nursing Pool Transparency

Background

Hospitals and long-term care facilities rely on health care staffing agencies – statutorily defined as nursing pools – for contract health care workers to help care for patients when they have surges and ongoing vacancies. Since the start of the pandemic, hospitals and long-term care facilities have been forced to increase their use of contract health care workers — known as “travelers” — to meet patient care needs. The increase in demand/use has coincided with significant rising costs and fees, which has created a challenging and unsustainable financial situation for hospitals and long-term care facilities.

WSHA Position

WSHA is seeking more transparency for staffing agencies. WSHA supports:

- Annual registration and disclosure of corporate structure and ownership;
- In contracts between hospitals or long-term care facilities and staffing agencies, requiring staffing agencies to disclose what it pays its contracted health care workers, and the administrative fees and charges to the contracting hospital or long-term care facility; and
- Requiring DOH to collect data from staffing agencies operating in Washington State and produce an annual report, which would detail, by county in which the work was performed:
 - The average amount charged to hospitals and long-term care facilities;
 - The average amount the staffing agency pays its contracted health care workers;
 - The labor-related costs paid by the staffing agency;
 - The total number of placements made by each registered staffing agency; and
 - The number of contracted health care workers who are placed at Washington hospitals and long-term care facilities within 25 miles and 50 miles of their permanent residence.

This will help hospitals and long-term care facilities better understand staffing agency costs and make informed decisions, such as whether to use a particular staffing agency’s services.

WSHA has been working with long-term care associations as they have experienced similar issues. The bill also contains provisions that solely apply to long-term care facilities to help address their industry-related needs.

Key Messages

- Staffing agencies should be required to disclose cost and placement information to promote transparency.
- Transparency will help hospitals and long-term care facilities make informed decisions.

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