



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

April 5, 2024

This letter supersedes AL TSA Letters:
AFH #2023-033; ALF #2023-024; ESF #2023-021; ICF/IID #2023-013;
CCRSS #2023-018 and NH #2023-033

AL TSA: AFH #2024-015
AL TSA: ALF #2024-013
AL TSA: CCRSS #2024-013
AL TSA: ESF #2024-014
AL TSA: ICF/IID #2024-010
AL TSA: NH #2024-018

**UPDATE TO RCS STAFF MASK WEARING IN LTC SETTINGS
DURING RESPIRATORY ILLNESS SEASON**

Dear Provider/Administrator/Superintendent:

This letter is to notify you, on Monday, April 8, 2024, Residential Care Services (RCS) is rescinding the requirement that all RCS staff wear a procedure, surgical, or higher equivalent mask upon entry and while conducting on-site visits in long-term care (LTC) settings. This decision is based upon a review of current respiratory virus data, public health recommendations, and consideration of the vulnerabilities of residents/clients served in LTC settings.

Background: On October 6, 2023, you were notified RCS would implement a requirement for RCS staff to wear a mask when conducting onsite visits in LTC settings. This message coincided with the respiratory virus season and data which demonstrated increased viral transmission of COVID-19, Influenza, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). The message included notification RCS would reevaluate this decision in March 2024.

RCS Mask Wearing and Related Procedures

Starting Monday April 8, 2024, RCS staff:

- May choose to voluntarily wear a mask inside LTC settings.
- Will have agency-issued personal protective equipment (PPE) available for use as needed.
- Will comply with LTC setting's policy / procedure regarding masking and will don a mask upon request when in a facility or home.
- Will comply with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and public health guidance where donning a mask is recommended (i.e., implementation of standard and transmission-based precautions).

RCS will continue to monitor respiratory virus data with consideration of public health recommendations and notify you of any changes to RCS staff masking procedures.

Thanks for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Dunn and Jamie Ford: jpc.ep@dshs.wa.gov, or your local RCS field manager.

Sincerely,

Amy Abbott, Director
Residential Care Services