

WAC 284-83-120 Availability of new services or providers. (1)

The issuer must notify policyholders of the availability of a new long-term policy series that provides coverage for new long-term care services or providers material in nature and not previously available through the issuer to the general public. The notice must be provided within twelve months after the date the new policy series is made available for sale in this state. Changes to policy structure or benefits or provisions that are minor in nature are not "new long-term care services or providers material in nature." Examples of when notification need not be provided include changes in elimination periods, benefit periods or benefit amounts.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, notification is not required for any long-term care insurance policy issued prior to January 1, 2009, or to any policyholder or certificate holder who is currently eligible for benefits, within an elimination period or on a claim, previously had been in claim status, or who would not be eligible to apply for coverage due to issue age limitations under the new policy series. The issuer may require that policyholders meet all eligibility requirements, including underwriting and payment of the required premium in order to add the new services or providers.

(3) The issuer must make the new coverage available in one of the following ways:

(a) By adding a rider to the existing policy and charging a separate premium for the new rider based on the insured's attained age;

(b) By exchanging the existing policy or certificate for one with an issue age based on the attained age of the insured and recognizing past insured status by granting premium credits toward the premiums for the new policy or certificate. The premium credits must be based on premiums paid or reserves held for the prior policy or certificate;

(c) By exchanging the existing policy or certificate for a new policy or certificate in which consideration for past insured status is recognized by setting the premium for the new policy or certificate at the issue age of the policy or certificate being exchanged. The cost for the new policy or certificate may recognize the difference in reserves between the new policy or certificate and the original policy or certificate; or

(d) By an alternative program developed by the issuer that meets the intent of this section if the program is filed with and approved by the commissioner.

(4) The issuer is not required to notify its policyholders of a new proprietary policy series created and filed for use in a limited distribution channel. For purposes of this subsection, "limited distribution channel" means distribution through a discrete entity, such as a financial institution or brokerage, through which specialized products are made available that are not available for sale to the general public. Policyholders that purchase a new proprietary policy must be notified when a new long-term care policy series that provides coverage for new long-term care services or providers material in nature is made available to that limited distribution channel.

(5) Policies issued pursuant to this section will be considered exchanges and not replacements. These exchanges are not subject to WAC 284-83-060 and 284-83-110, and the reporting requirements of WAC 284-83-065 (1) through (5).

(6)(a) If the policy is offered through an employer, labor organization, professional, trade or occupational association, the required notification in subsection (1) of this section must be made to the offering entity.

(b) If the policy is issued to a group defined in RCW 48.83.020 (6) (d), the notification must be made to each certificate holder.

(7) Nothing in this section prohibits the issuer from offering any policy, rider, certificate or coverage change to any policyholder or certificate holder. Upon request, any policyholder may apply for currently available coverage that includes the new services or providers. The issuer may require the policyholder to meet all eligibility requirements, including underwriting and payment of the required premium to add new services or providers.

(8) This section does not apply to life insurance policies or riders containing accelerated long-term care benefits.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 48.02.060, 48.83.070, 48.83.110, 48.83.120, 48.83.130(1), and 48.83.140 (4)(a). WSR 08-24-019 (Matter No. R 2008-09), § 284-83-120, filed 11/24/08, effective 12/25/08.]