

**RCW 70.38.115 Certificates of need—Procedures—Rules—Criteria for review—Conditional certificates of need—Concurrent review—Review periods—Hearing—Adjudicative proceeding—Amended certificates of need.**

(1) Certificates of need shall be issued, denied, suspended, or revoked by the designee of the secretary in accord with the provisions of this chapter and rules of the department which establish review procedures and criteria for the certificate of need program.

(2) Criteria for the review of certificate of need applications, except as provided in subsection (3) of this section for health maintenance organizations, shall include but not be limited to consideration of the following:

(a) The need that the population served or to be served by such services has for such services;

(b) The availability of less costly or more effective alternative methods of providing such services;

(c) The financial feasibility and the probable impact of the proposal on the cost of and charges for providing health services in the community to be served;

(d) In the case of health services to be provided, (i) the availability of alternative uses of project resources for the provision of other health services, (ii) the extent to which such proposed services will be accessible to all residents of the area to be served, and (iii) the need for and the availability in the community of services and facilities for osteopathic physicians and surgeons and allopathic physicians and their patients. The department shall consider the application in terms of its impact on existing and proposed institutional training programs for doctors of osteopathic medicine and surgery and medicine at the student, internship, and residency training levels;

(e) In the case of a construction project, the costs and methods of the proposed construction, including the cost and methods of energy provision, and the probable impact of the construction project reviewed (i) on the cost of providing health services by the person proposing such construction project and (ii) on the cost and charges to the public of providing health services by other persons;

(f) The special needs and circumstances of osteopathic hospitals, nonallopathic services and children's hospitals;

(g) Improvements or innovations in the financing and delivery of health services which foster cost containment and serve to promote quality assurance and cost-effectiveness;

(h) In the case of health services proposed to be provided, the efficiency and appropriateness of the use of existing services and facilities similar to those proposed;

(i) In the case of existing services or facilities, the quality of care provided by such services or facilities in the past;

(j) In the case of hospital certificate of need applications, whether the hospital meets or exceeds the regional average level of charity care, as determined by the secretary; and

(k) In the case of nursing home applications:

(i) The availability of other nursing home beds in the planning area to be served; and

(ii) The availability of other services in the community to be served. Data used to determine the availability of other services will include but not be limited to data provided by the department of social and health services.

(3) A certificate of need application of a health maintenance organization or a health care facility which is controlled, directly or indirectly, by a health maintenance organization, shall be approved by the department if the department finds:

(a) Approval of such application is required to meet the needs of the members of the health maintenance organization and of the new members which such organization can reasonably be expected to enroll; and

(b) The health maintenance organization is unable to provide, through services or facilities which can reasonably be expected to be available to the organization, its health services in a reasonable and cost-effective manner which is consistent with the basic method of operation of the organization and which makes such services available on a long-term basis through physicians and other health professionals associated with it.

A health care facility, or any part thereof, with respect to which a certificate of need was issued under this subsection may not be sold or leased and a controlling interest in such facility or in a lease of such facility may not be acquired unless the department issues a certificate of need approving the sale, acquisition, or lease.

(4) Until the final expiration of the state health plan as provided under \*RCW 70.38.919, the decision of the department on a certificate of need application shall be consistent with the state health plan in effect, except in emergency circumstances which pose a threat to the public health. The department in making its final decision may issue a conditional certificate of need if it finds that the project is justified only under specific circumstances. The conditions shall directly relate to the project being reviewed. The conditions may be released if it can be substantiated that the conditions are no longer valid and the release of such conditions would be consistent with the purposes of this chapter.

(5) Criteria adopted for review in accordance with subsection (2) of this section may vary according to the purpose for which the particular review is being conducted or the type of health service reviewed.

(6) The department shall specify information to be required for certificate of need applications. Within fifteen days of receipt of the application, the department shall request additional information considered necessary to the application or start the review process. Applicants may decline to submit requested information through written notice to the department, in which case review starts on the date of receipt of the notice. Applications may be denied or limited because of failure to submit required and necessary information.

(7) Concurrent review is for the purpose of comparative analysis and evaluation of competing or similar projects in order to determine which of the projects may best meet identified needs. Categories of projects subject to concurrent review include at least new health care facilities, new services, and expansion of existing health care facilities. The department shall specify time periods for the submission of applications for certificates of need subject to concurrent review, which shall not exceed ninety days. Review of concurrent applications shall start fifteen days after the conclusion of the time period for submission of applications subject to concurrent review. Concurrent review periods shall be limited to one hundred fifty days, except as provided for in rules adopted by the

department authorizing and limiting amendment during the course of the review, or for an unresolved pivotal issue declared by the department.

(8) Review periods for certificate of need applications other than those subject to concurrent review shall be limited to ninety days. Review periods may be extended up to thirty days if needed by a review agency, and for unresolved pivotal issues the department may extend up to an additional thirty days. A review may be extended in any case if the applicant agrees to the extension.

(9) The department or its designee, shall conduct a public hearing on a certificate of need application if requested unless the review is expedited or subject to emergency review. The department by rule shall specify the period of time within which a public hearing must be requested and requirements related to public notice of the hearing, procedures, recordkeeping and related matters.

(10) (a) Any applicant denied a certificate of need or whose certificate of need has been suspended or revoked has the right to an adjudicative proceeding. The proceeding is governed by chapter 34.05 RCW, the Administrative Procedure Act.

(b) Any health care facility or health maintenance organization that: (i) Provides services similar to the services provided by the applicant and under review pursuant to this subsection; (ii) is located within the applicant's health service area; and (iii) testified or submitted evidence at a public hearing held pursuant to subsection (9) of this section, shall be provided an opportunity to present oral or written testimony and argument in a proceeding under this subsection: PROVIDED, That the health care facility or health maintenance organization had, in writing, requested to be informed of the department's decisions.

(c) If the department desires to settle with the applicant prior to the conclusion of the adjudicative proceeding, the department shall so inform the health care facility or health maintenance organization and afford them an opportunity to comment, in advance, on the proposed settlement.

(11) An amended certificate of need shall be required for the following modifications of an approved project:

(a) A new service requiring review under this chapter;

(b) An expansion of a service subject to review beyond that originally approved;

(c) An increase in bed capacity;

(d) A significant reduction in the scope of a nursing home project without a commensurate reduction in the cost of the nursing home project, or a cost increase (as represented in bids on a nursing home construction project or final cost estimates acceptable to the person to whom the certificate of need was issued) if the total of such increases exceeds twelve percent or fifty thousand dollars, whichever is greater, over the maximum capital expenditure approved. The review of reductions or cost increases shall be restricted to the continued conformance of the nursing home project with the review criteria pertaining to financial feasibility and cost containment.

(12) An application for a certificate of need for a nursing home capital expenditure which is determined by the department to be required to eliminate or prevent imminent safety hazards or correct violations of applicable licensure and accreditation standards shall be approved.

(13) (a) Replacement of existing nursing home beds in the same planning area by an existing licensee who has operated the beds for at least one year shall not require a certificate of need under this

chapter. The licensee shall give written notice of its intent to replace the existing nursing home beds to the department and shall provide the department with information as may be required pursuant to rule. Replacement of the beds by a party other than the licensee is subject to certificate of need review under this chapter, except as otherwise permitted by subsection (14) of this section.

(b) When an entire nursing home ceases operation, the licensee or any other party who has secured an interest in the beds may reserve his or her interest in the beds for eight years or until a certificate of need to replace them is issued, whichever occurs first. However, the nursing home, licensee, or any other party who has secured an interest in the beds must give notice of its intent to retain the beds to the department of health no later than thirty days after the effective date of the facility's closure. Certificate of need review shall be required for any party who has reserved the nursing home beds except that the need criteria shall be deemed met when the applicant is the licensee who had operated the beds for at least one year, who has operated the beds for at least one year immediately preceding the reservation of the beds, and who is replacing the beds in the same planning area.

(14) In the event that a licensee, who has provided the department with notice of his or her intent to replace nursing home beds under subsection (13)(a) of this section, engages in unprofessional conduct or becomes unable to practice with reasonable skill and safety by reason of mental or physical condition, pursuant to chapter 18.130 RCW, or dies, the building owner shall be permitted to complete the nursing home bed replacement project, provided the building owner has secured an interest in the beds. [1996 c 178 s 22; 1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 72; 1993 c 508 s 6. Prior: 1989 1st ex.s. c 9 s 605; 1989 c 175 s 126; 1984 c 288 s 22; 1983 c 235 s 8; 1980 c 139 s 8; 1979 ex.s. c 161 s 11.]

**\*Reviser's note:** RCW 70.38.919 was repealed by 2007 c 259 s 67.

**Effective date—1996 c 178:** See note following RCW 18.35.110.

**Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 18:** See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

**Section captions—Severability—Effective date—1993 c 508:** See RCW 74.39A.900 through 74.39A.903.

**Effective date—1989 c 175:** See note following RCW 34.05.010.

**Severability—1984 c 288:** See note following RCW 70.38.105.

**Effective date—1980 c 139:** See RCW 70.38.916.

**Effective dates—1979 ex.s. c 161:** See RCW 70.38.915.