



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

August 31, 2015

ALTSA: NH #2015-030
USE OF ELECTRONIC-CIGARETTES IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

Recently some questions have been posed regarding the use of e-cigarettes ("e-cigs") in long term care settings. In December 2011, RCS issued Dear Administrator letter NH #2011-021 regarding Survey and Certification letter (S&C) 12-04: Smoking Safety in Long-Term Care Facilities. The last paragraph of this S&C states:

"A new issue concerns the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes). These products are designed to deliver nicotine or other substances to the user in the form of a vapor. They are composed of a rechargeable, battery-operated heating element, a replaceable cartridge that may contain nicotine or other chemicals, and an atomizer that, when heated, converts the contents of the cartridge into a vapor. The vapor has a light odor that dissipates quickly. These e-cigarettes are not considered smoking devices, and their heating element does not pose the same dangers of ignition as regular cigarettes."

While no new S&C has been issued regarding the use of e-cigarettes, it is recommended facilities keep the following in mind when allowing residents to use a device:

- Users should always follow manufacturer recommendations when charging and using the device. A small number of incidents have occurred over the past few years when improper charging devices and/or improper batteries were used.
- The solution within the cartridge can be toxic and should be stored in a safe place away from those who could potentially drink the liquid.
- Facility policy should address the safe use and storage of e-cigarettes.
- Facilities are responsible to know if their local jurisdiction has additional ordinances or restrictions that apply to the use of e-cigarettes

The following websites contain further information, education, and things to consider regarding the use of e-cigarettes:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Tobacco/OtherTobaccoProducts/ECigarettes>
https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/electronic_cigarettes.pdf

Thank you for your continued commitment to nursing home residents. If you have any questions, please contact your RCS Field Manager.

Sincerely,

Kathy Morgan, Interim Director
Residential Care Services

"Transforming Lives"