Part 7 - Nursing Services

7.1 ORGANIZATION. The facility shall have a department of nursing services that is formally organized to provide complete, effective care to each resident. The facility shall clearly define qualifications, authority, and responsibility of nursing personnel in written job descriptions.

7.2 DIRECTOR OF NURSING. Except as provided in Section 7.6, a nursing care facility shall employ a full-time (40 hours/week) Director of Nursing, who is a registered nurse, qualified by education and experience to direct facility nursing care.

7.3 24-HOUR NURSING COVERAGE. The facility shall be staffed with qualified nursing personnel, awake and on duty, who are familiar with the residents and their needs in a number sufficient to meet resident functional dependency, medical, and nursing needs.

7.3.1 Staff shall be sufficient in number to provide prompt assistance to persons needing or potentially needing assistance, considering individual needs such as the risk of accidents, hazards, or other untoward events. Staff shall provide such assistance.

7.3.2 Except as provided in Section 7.6, a nursing care facility shall be staffed at all times with at least one registered nurse who is on duty on the premises. Each resident care unit shall be staffed with at least a licensed nurse.

7.3.3 Except as provided in Section 7.6, an intermediate care facility shall be staffed with at least one full-time licensed registered nurse or licensed practical nurse who is on duty on the premises on the day shift seven days per week. A facility using a licensed practical nurse as a director of nursing shall provide at least 4 hours per week of consultation by a licensed registered nurse.

7.3.4 A nursing care facility shall provide nurse staffing sufficient in number to provide at least 2.0 hours of nursing time per resident per day. In facilities of 60 residents or more, the time of the Director of Nursing, Staff development Coordinator, and other supervisory personnel who are not providing direct resident care shall not be used in computing this ratio.

7.3.5 Nursing personnel shall be trained in nursing procedures and responsibilities and shall be familiar with any equipment necessary for care on the unit.

7.3.6 All nursing assistants and other nursing personnel shall function under the direction of a registered nurse.
7.3.7 If a long-term care facility operates out of more than one building, it shall have a staff on duty 24 hours per day in each building in a number sufficient to meet resident care needs.

7.4 WRITTEN PROCEDURES. The facility shall have written nursing procedures establishing the standards of performance for safe, effective nursing care of residents and shall assure that they are followed by all nursing staff.

7.4.1 Procedures shall include the requirement that medications be administered in compliance with applicable Colorado law.

7.4.2 The nursing procedures shall be evaluated and revised as necessary but no less often than annually.

7.5 NURSE STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES. Nursing staff shall participate in resident assessment, resident care planning, and resident nursing care, as prescribed by this Part and Part 5.

7.6 EXCEPTIONS. Nothing contained in this Part shall require any rural long-term care facility certified as a Skilled Nursing Facility or an Intermediate Care Facility under Medicaid to employ nursing staff beyond current federal certification requirements. Since federal standards require that nurse staffing be sufficient to meet the total nursing needs of all residents, resident conditions will in all events determine the specific numbers and qualifications of staff that each facility must provide.

7.6.1 A rural facility is one that is located in:

(1) a county of fewer than fifteen thousand population; or

(2) a municipality of fewer than fifteen thousand population that is located ten miles or more from a municipality of fifteen thousand population or over; or

(3) the unincorporated part of a county ten miles or more from a municipality of fifteen thousand population or more.

7.6.2 To the extent that these regulations require any facility to employ a registered nurse more than 40 hours per week, the Department may waive such requirements for such periods as it deems appropriate if, based on findings consistent with Part 4 of Chapter II of these regulations it determines that:

(1) The facility is located in a rural area as defined in Subsection 7.6.1;

(2) The facility has at least one full-time registered nurse who is regularly on duty 40 hours per week;

(3) The facility has only residents whose attending physicians have indicated in orders or admission notes that each resident does not require the services of a registered nurse for a 48-hour period or the facility has made arrangements for a professional nurse or physician to spend such time at the facility as is determined necessary by the resident’s attending physician to provide needed services on days when the regular full-time registered nurse is not on duty; and
(4) The facility has made and continues to make a good faith effort to comply with the more than 40-hour registered nurse requirement, but registered nurses are unavailable in the area.