



# News Release

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## **Statement of Deficiencies issued to Northwest Hospital**

**OLYMPIA** – The Department of Health issued a Statement of Deficiencies to Northwest Hospital for failing to appropriately investigate and report suspected diversion by a former surgical technician, Rocky Allen, who worked there in 2012. The deficiencies identified by the Department of Health center on the hospital’s failure to respond appropriately to suspected drug diversion by Allen. Allen is currently awaiting trial on federal criminal charges for diverting medications while working at a hospital in Colorado.

[State regulations](#) require health care facilities in Washington to report to the Department of Health within 20 days when they determine an employee who holds a health care credential may have committed professional misconduct, such as drug diversion. The department’s investigation found the hospital failed to adequately investigate suspected diversion by Rocky Allen and did not report the incident as required. The investigation could not confirm conclusively whether Allen actually diverted drugs while at this hospital or if his drug-related misconduct infected patients.

Northwest Hospital has 10 days to respond to the Statement of Deficiencies by developing and submitting a Plan of Correction designed to prevent similar circumstances from occurring in the future. The Department of Health will review the Plan of Correction to ensure adequacy, and if approved Northwest Hospital must implement the plan to the department’s satisfaction. If the plan or its implementation falls below the department’s requirements, enforcement action can be taken.

Allen’s Washington Surgical Technologist credential expired in July 2012. He attempted to reapply for this credential in February of this year. The Department of Health denied his

requested renewal and indefinitely suspended his right to practice in Washington after learning his similar credential was suspended in the state of Colorado for allegations of drug diversion. A review of Allen's initial application for Washington certification, submitted in 2011, found he did not truthfully answer questions about his criminal or disciplinary history, even though he was court-martialed and discharged from the military in-part due to drug diversion. As part of the initial state licensing process, a Washington State Patrol background check and a National Practitioner Data Bank check were completed for Allen, but no criminal or disciplinary issues were identified by either of those checks.

A separate Department of Health investigation of Lakewood Surgical Center, a facility where Allen worked prior to being employed by Northwest Hospital, did not find evidence that sufficient suspicion existed to require a mandated report to the Department of Health.

Northwest Hospital and Lakewood Surgical Center, along with Naval Hospital in Bremerton where Allen also worked, performed investigations and consulted with local and state public health agencies and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to assess potential risk to patient safety. Though there was no evidence of any patient exposure, and the risk is thought to be very low, both Northwest Hospital and Lakewood Surgery Center notified patients who had surgery during Allen's employment and recommended that they be tested for blood borne pathogens. For additional information about the patient notifications, please see: [Lakewood Surgery Center](#); or [Northwest Hospital patient information](#).

A copy of the [Statement of Deficiencies](#) for Northwest Hospital is available to the public. A [news release](#) describing the March 2016 suspension of Allen's Washington surgical technician credential is on the department's website. Once the hospital has submitted an acceptable Plan of Correction and the department has verified implementation, the investigation file will be made available by request to the public.

The documents can be seen online by clicking "[Look up a health care provider](#)" on the [Department of Health website](#) copies can be requested by calling 360-236-4700 – that's also the number to call to file complaints against health care providers in Washington.

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