Department of Health – Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission

RCW 18.64A.040(3) allows Washington pharmacies to submit a pharmacy services plan to the Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission (Commission) to use more pharmacy technicians per pharmacists than the standard ratio of 3:1 set in WAC 246-901-130. In February 2018, the Commission accepted a process for pharmacies to submit such proposals.

A pharmacy seeking an exemption to the standard ratio must submit the following to the Commission:

1. Request for Consideration Form, and
2. A pharmacy services plan

Documents should be submitted by email to WSPQAC@doh.wa.gov

Below is information on requesting an exemption, and on what your pharmacy services plan must include. Requests for consideration must be received 60 days before the business meeting at which a licensed pharmacy making the request wishes to be appear.

Pharmacist to Pharmacy Technician Ratio Exemption – Application Guidance

1. What is the current standard ratio of pharmacists to pharmacy technicians?

   The current standard ratio of pharmacists to pharmacy technicians is one pharmacist to a maximum of three pharmacy technicians (WAC 246-901-130(1)). The Commission is engaged in rulemaking that may result in a change to the standard ratio.

2. Can a pharmacy make a request for a pharmacist to supervise more three pharmacy technicians?

   If a pharmacy desires to use more pharmacy technicians than the standard ratio, the pharmacy must submit a pharmacy services plan to the Commission for approval [RCW 18.64A.040(3)]. The pharmacy services plan must include, at a minimum:
   - Pharmacy design and equipment,
   - Information systems,
   - Workflow,
   - Quality assurance procedures, and
   - Demonstration of how it facilitates the provision of pharmaceutical care by the pharmacy. (RCW 18.64A.040(3)(a)).

3. Does an Ancillary Utilization Plan (AUP) need to be updated if the Commission approves a deviation from the standard pharmacist to pharmacy technician ratio?

   An AUP will need to be updated and provided to Commission for approval only if it modifies the manner and extent to which ancillary personnel will be used and supervised. If deviation from
the standard pharmacist to pharmacy technician ratio will not modify the manner and extent to which ancillary personnel would be used and supervised, then an updated AUP would not need to be submitted to the Commission for approval (see RCW 18.64A.060).

If no change or modifications are affected when a ratio changes, then a new AUP is not required.

4. Can the Commission deny my request to use more pharmacy technicians than the standard ratio?

When considering whether to approve a request to use more pharmacy technicians than the standard ratio, the Commission may make one of the following determinations:

- Approve the request unconditionally,
- Give conditional approval only as a pilot or demonstration project,
- Deny the request, or
- Request more information to ensure appropriate oversight of pharmacy ancillary personnel.
(See RCW 18.64A.040(3)).