There have been many questions from nurses about the new requirements for suicide prevention training. Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1424 modified the law enacted in 2014 (RCW 43.70.442) establishing suicide prevention training requirements for nurses and other health care providers. The law requires a one-time training course (at least six hours in length) in suicide assessment, treatment, and management. The law exempts certified registered nurse anesthetists.

The Washington State Department of Health is required to adopt rules establishing the minimum standards for the training programs by June 30, 2016. Beginning July 1, 2017, the training must be on the approved model list developed by the Washington State Department of Health. The course must include a portion devoted to working with veterans and assessment of issues related to imminent harm via lethal means or self-injurious behaviors.

Nursing Commission recently approved changes to the existing continuing competency rules (WAC 246-840-220) to address the new requirements. A summary includes the following key points:

- Nurses must complete a one-time training the first full continuing education competency cycle;
- Training will be accepted between June 12, 2014 and June 30, 2016, as long as it includes content about assessment, treatment, and management – training may be from a program on the model list or from other training programs;
- The six-hour training may be done in one or more sessions;
- Training is required during the nurse’s first full three-year continuing competency cycle; for example, a nurse is in the middle of the three-year cycle. The new cycle starts on the nurse’s birthday in 2017. The requirement for suicide prevention training would be at the end of that three-year cycle on the nurse’s birthday in 2020; and
- Nurses will not need to send documentation of training unless selected for our continuing competency requirement random audits.

Reference:

We will send out more information as it becomes available. If you have any questions, please contact:

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