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Health and Human Services
Agency
**California Department of
Public Health**



Gavin Newsom
Governor

April 21, 2026

AFL 26-12

TO: Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs)

SUBJECT: Medical Director Certification and Reporting Requirements

AUTHORITY: Health and Safety Code (HSC) section 1261.4

All Facilities Letter (AFL) Summary

- This AFL reminds SNFs of the medical director reporting requirements. SNFs must report the following to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH):
 - Medical director's name
 - Medical director's certification status
 - Any changes to its medical director
- SNFs that are not in compliance with the medical director reporting requirements may be subject to a deficiency and enforcement actions.
- A medical director employed in a SNF as of January 1, 2022, has until January 1, 2027, to become a Certified Medical Director.

HSC section 1261.4 requires all SNFs to report to CDPH the name and certification status of the facility's medical director by submitting all of the following information for its medical director:

- An HS 215A form (PDF) or its successor form
- A résumé
- Whether its medical director is certified as a Certified Medical Director according to the requirements established by the Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medical Association (PALTmed) (formerly known as the American Board of Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine)[1]
- The expected date of certification, if the medical director is not yet certified

As a reminder, a SNF is prohibited from contracting with a person as a medical director if the person is not, or will not within five years of the date of initial hire as the facility's medical director, be certified. A medical director employed in a SNF as of January 1, 2022, has until January 1, 2027, to obtain certification as a Certified Medical Director by PALTmed.

If a medical director is not yet certified, provide proof of progress towards certification via:

1. Copy of certification initiation letter issued by PALTmed that includes the medical director's expected date of certification

OR

2. Attestation Letter – Signed by the applicant (Medical Director) affirming that they are aware and will comply with the requirements of HSC section 1261.4

Due to availability of certification courses, it is recommended that any medical directors who have not enrolled in a program do so to ensure sufficient time to complete coursework and the certification process before the January 1, 2027, deadline.

SNFs must also notify CDPH within 10 calendar days of any changes in its medical director by submitting an HS 215A form or its successor form, a résumé, and proof of certification or progress towards certification for its new medical director. Facilities that are not in compliance with the medical director reporting requirements may be subject to a deficiency and enforcement actions.

These requirements do not apply to a SNF that is operated as a distinct part of an acute care hospital; however, a SNF that is operated as a distinct part of an acute care hospital must designate a qualified physician as a medical director who is responsible for standards, coordination, surveillance, and planning for improvement of medical care in the facility, where qualified physician means either of the following:

- The physician is certified, or pursuing certification, by PALTmed as a Certified Medical Director.
- The physician is board certified in a medical specialty consistent with the type of care provided in the SNF, including, but not limited to, physical medicine and rehabilitation or pulmonology, and whose role as the medical director of the SNF has been reviewed and approved by the hospital's leadership.

Visit the Health Care Facility Licensing and Certification's SNF Change of Medical Director webpage for application information.

Submit Change of Medical Director applications to the Centralized Applications Branch (CAB) to:

California Department of Public Health
Licensing and Certification Program
Centralized Applications Branch
P.O. Box 997377, MS 3207
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

If you have any questions regarding the Change of Medical Director application, please contact CAB, Long Term Care Section at CABLTC@cdph.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Mandi Posner

Mandi Posner
Deputy Director

Resources:

- AFL 21-46 Assembly Bill 749 – Medical Director Certification
- PALTmed Certified Medical Director webpage

[1] Previously managed by the American Board of Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine (ABPLM), the Certified Medical Director Certification Program transitioned to PALTmed on January 1, 2025, following the dissolution of ABPLM.

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