

RCW 70.41.020 Definitions. Unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the following terms, whenever used in this chapter, shall be deemed to have the following meanings:

(1) "Aftercare" means the assistance provided by a lay caregiver to a patient under this chapter after the patient's discharge from a hospital. The assistance may include, but is not limited to, assistance with activities of daily living, wound care, medication assistance, and the operation of medical equipment. "Aftercare" includes assistance only for conditions that were present at the time of the patient's discharge from the hospital. "Aftercare" does not include:

(a) Assistance related to conditions for which the patient did not receive medical care, treatment, or observation in the hospital; or

(b) Tasks the performance of which requires licensure as a health care provider.

(2) (a) "Audio-only telemedicine" means the delivery of health care services through the use of audio-only technology, permitting real-time communication between the patient at the originating site and the provider, for the purpose of diagnosis, consultation, or treatment.

(b) "Audio-only telemedicine" does not include:

(i) The use of facsimile or email; or

(ii) The delivery of health care services that are customarily delivered by audio-only technology and customarily not billed as separate services by the provider, such as the sharing of laboratory results.

(3) "Department" means the Washington state department of health.

(4) "Discharge" means a patient's release from a hospital following the patient's admission to the hospital.

(5) "Distant site" means the site at which a physician or other licensed provider, delivering a professional service, is physically located at the time the service is provided through telemedicine.

(6) "Emergency care to victims of sexual assault" means medical examinations, procedures, and services provided by a hospital emergency room to a victim of sexual assault following an alleged sexual assault.

(7) "Emergency contraception" means any health care treatment approved by the food and drug administration that prevents pregnancy, including but not limited to administering two increased doses of certain oral contraceptive pills within seventy-two hours of sexual contact.

(8) "Emergency medical condition" means:

(a) A condition of such severity that the absence of immediate medical attention could result in: (i) Placing the health of an individual or, with respect to a pregnant person, the health of the pregnant person or their embryo or fetus in serious jeopardy; (ii) serious impairment to bodily functions; or (iii) serious dysfunction of a bodily organ or part;

(b) With respect to a pregnant person who is having contractions:

(i) That there is inadequate time to affect a safe transfer to another hospital before delivery; or (ii) that transfer may pose a threat to the health or safety of the pregnant person or their embryo or fetus; or

(c) Any of the following conditions: Ectopic pregnancy; emergent complications resulting from pregnancy or of pregnancy loss; previable preterm premature rupture of membranes; emergent placental

abnormalities; or emergent hypertensive disorders, such as preeclampsia.

(9) "Hospital" means any institution, place, building, or agency which provides accommodations, facilities and services over a continuous period of twenty-four hours or more, for observation, diagnosis, or care, of two or more individuals not related to the operator who are suffering from illness, injury, deformity, or abnormality, or from any other condition for which obstetrical, medical, or surgical services would be appropriate for care or diagnosis. "Hospital" as used in this chapter does not include hotels, or similar places furnishing only food and lodging, or simply domiciliary care; nor does it include clinics, or physician's offices where patients are not regularly kept as bed patients for twenty-four hours or more; nor does it include nursing homes, as defined and which come within the scope of chapter 18.51 RCW; nor does it include birthing centers, which come within the scope of chapter 18.46 RCW; nor does it include behavioral health hospitals, which come within the scope of chapter 71.12 RCW; nor any other hospital, or institution specifically intended for use in the diagnosis and care of those suffering from mental illness, intellectual disability, convulsive disorders, or other abnormal mental condition. Furthermore, nothing in this chapter or the rules adopted pursuant thereto shall be construed as authorizing the supervision, regulation, or control of the remedial care or treatment of residents or patients in any hospital conducted for those who rely primarily upon treatment by prayer or spiritual means in accordance with the creed or tenets of any well recognized church or religious denominations.

(10) "Immediate jeopardy" means a situation in which the hospital's noncompliance with one or more statutory or regulatory requirements has placed the health and safety of patients in its care at risk for serious injury, serious harm, serious impairment, or death.

(11) "Lay caregiver" means any individual designated as such by a patient under this chapter who provides aftercare assistance to a patient in the patient's residence. "Lay caregiver" does not include a long-term care worker as defined in RCW 74.39A.009.

(12) "Originating site" means the physical location of a patient receiving health care services through telemedicine.

(13) "Person" means any individual, firm, partnership, corporation, company, association, or joint stock association, and the legal successor thereof.

(14) "Secretary" means the secretary of health.

(15) "Sexual assault" has the same meaning as in RCW 70.125.030.

(16) "Telemedicine" means the delivery of health care services through the use of interactive audio and video technology, permitting real-time communication between the patient at the originating site and the provider, for the purpose of diagnosis, consultation, or treatment. "Telemedicine" includes audio-only telemedicine, but does not include facsimile or email.

(17) "Victim of sexual assault" means a person who alleges or is alleged to have been sexually assaulted and who presents as a patient. [2025 c 182 s 4. Prior: 2021 c 157 s 3; 2021 c 61 s 1; 2016 c 226 s 1; prior: 2015 c 23 s 5; 2010 c 94 s 17; 2002 c 116 s 2; 1991 c 3 s 334; 1985 c 213 s 16; 1971 ex.s. c 189 s 8; 1955 c 267 s 2.]

Findings—Effective date—2025 c 182: See notes following RCW 70.41.570.

Conflict with federal requirements—2021 c 157: See note following RCW 74.09.327.

Intent—2015 c 23: See note following RCW 41.05.700.

Purpose—2010 c 94: See note following RCW 44.04.280.

Findings—2002 c 116: See note following RCW 70.41.350.

Savings—Effective date—1985 c 213: See notes following RCW 43.20.050.