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## ***AFH Quality Assurance Panel Report – HB1277***

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### **What is the Adult Family Home Quality Assurance Panel?**

Established by the 2011 Washington State Legislature (ESHB 1277), the Adult Family Home Quality Assurance Panel was directed to review problems of neglect and abuse in adult family homes, and to reduce incidents of abuse, neglect, abandonment, and financial exploitation. The panel was asked to consider inspection, investigation, public complaint, and enforcement issues that relate to adult family homes. The panel also was mandated to focus on oversight issues to address minor violations, processes for handling unresolved citations, and better ways to oversee new providers. At the end of its work, the panel was directed to provide a report with recommendations to the Governor, the Senate Health and Long-Term Care Committee, and the House of Representatives Health and Wellness Committee.

The Adult Family Home Quality Assurance Panel, assembled by the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and DSHS, was comprised of representatives from Adult Family Home associations and providers, resident advocates and families, nursing/hospice care, public guardianship, and DSHS oversight and management divisions.

### **What are the highlights of the findings?**

The quality of care in Adult Family Homes would be improved, and abuse and neglect would decline, if:

- 1) some caregivers and Adult Family Home owners received better mentoring and training;
- 2) residents and their families were better informed and selected the appropriate Adult Family Home for their needs; and
- 3) DSHS oversight was more vigorous and prompt against poorly performing homes.

### **Are Adult Family Homes good places to live and receive care?**

With 2,803 Adult Family Homes across the state of Washington, the majority of them provide excellent care and are often a preferred alternative to a larger nursing or assisted living facilities. Adult Family Homes are located in most neighborhoods and are licensed to provide room, board, and care for two to six adult residents who are vulnerable and/or have disabilities. The range of personal care needed by residents could range from minimal assistance with daily activities, such as bathing and dressing, to complete care equal to a nursing home.

### **What process did the panel use to arrive at the recommendations?**

The panel utilized a Consensus Oriented Decision making model. The process allowed for all members of the panel, representing various stakeholder concerns and preferences, to be heard and that their needs be addressed by all group members, as much as possible. The group aimed for unanimity in agreement. Not every individual agreed to every statement in the report, but there was a near unanimity in the recommendations. Nearly all members of the panel also supported the beliefs that the quality of care in AFHs would be improved, and abuse and neglect would decline, if some caregivers and AFH owners received better training and mentoring, residents and their families were better informed and selected the right AFH, and DSHS oversight was more vigorous and prompt against poorly performing AFHs. DSHS was given two months to review the summaries of case examples, which also informed the panel. The panel also agreed to allow for dissenting or minority opinions to be included in the report, but none were offered.

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### **What was the process for the sampling of case investigation files?**

The panel met between September 2011 and September 2012. In addition to the full panel meetings, a team from the Washington State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Office, a resident-rights advocacy group, reviewed a random sample of unredacted DSHS licensing and investigation files covering a one-year period. The DSHS files were reviewed by a team of ombudsmen, overseen by the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman attorney. The same reviewers participated in all case reviews.

The sampling covered four categories: 1) complaint investigations enforced by DSHS (i.e. a remedy or penalty imposed); 2) full licensing inspections; 3) complaint investigations with a citation but no enforcement action; 4) complaint investigations involving multi-home owners with enforcement action against two or more homes.

From full DSHS files, the cases selected were then distilled into one- to four-page case summaries. Of the 160 files, about 50 representative cases were selected based upon the completeness of the file and geographic diversity. These were shared with a subcommittee of the panel, with the opportunity for questions and comments.

The focus of the panel was on adult family homes, and the facility oversight provided by DSHS, as opposed to investigations into allegations about individual caregivers.

### **Who should I call to report problems or concerns about abuse, neglect or violation of the rights of a resident in a nursing home, adult family home or assisted living?**

Call Aging and Disability Services Administration (ADSA): Call 1-800-562-6078 or TTY Users 1-800-737-7931

### **How do I contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program?**

Call the State LTC Ombudsman Information and Complaint Line at: 1-800-562-6028, or log onto [www.waombudsman.org](http://www.waombudsman.org) to learn more about resident rights. By email: [ltop@multi-servicecenter.com](mailto:ltop@multi-servicecenter.com).

### **Where can I learn more about adult family homes?**

*Choosing Care in an Adult Family Home*, DSHS booklet (English and other languages posted online):  
<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/Publications/22-707.pdf>

Information about Adult Family Homes, Consumers, Providers, by DSHS:  
<http://www.adsa.dshs.wa.gov/professional/afh/aboutAFH.htm>

Washington State Residential Care Council of Adult Family Homes: <https://www.wsrcc.org/> or Call 888-439-8999

Find a licensed adult family home in Washington, by DSHS:  
<https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/adsaapps/Lookup/AFHAdvLookup.aspx>

Eldercare Locator, for information about long-term options available in your community. Call 1-800-677-1116 or <http://www.eldercare.gov/Eldercare.NET/Public/Index.aspx>