

TITLE 26 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
PART 1 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
CHAPTER 553 LICENSING STANDARDS FOR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES
SUBCHAPTER K COVID-19 RESPONSE

EMERGENCY RULE ADOPTION PREAMBLE

The Executive Commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC or Commission) adopts on an emergency basis in Title 26 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 553, Licensing Standards for Assisted Living Facilities, new §553.2004, concerning an emergency rule to track vaccinations of staff and residents in long-term care facilities in Texas in response to COVID-19. As authorized by Texas Government Code §2001.034, the Commission may adopt an emergency rule without prior notice or hearing if it finds that an imminent peril to the public health, safety, or welfare requires adoption on fewer than 30 days' notice. Emergency rules adopted under Texas Government Code §2001.034 may be effective for not longer than 120 days and may be renewed for not longer than 60 days.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the emergency rulemaking is to support the Governor's March 13, 2020, proclamation certifying that the COVID-19 virus poses an imminent threat of disaster in the state and declaring a state of disaster for all counties in Texas. In this proclamation, the Governor authorized the use of all available resources of state government and of political subdivisions that are reasonably necessary to cope with this disaster and directed that government entities and businesses would continue providing essential services. HHSC accordingly finds that an imminent peril to the public health, safety, and welfare of the state requires immediate adoption of this emergency rule for Assisted Living Facility COVID-19 Vaccination Data Reporting and Emergency Communication System Enrollment.

To protect assisted living facility residents and the public health, safety, and welfare of the state during the COVID-19 pandemic, HHSC is adopting an emergency rule to require assisted living facilities to accurately report COVID-19 vaccination data for staff and residents to HHSC in the format established by HHSC within 24 hours of completing a round of vaccinations. This rule is necessary to accurately track vaccinations of staff and residents in long-term care facilities in Texas.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The emergency rulemaking is adopted under Texas Government Code §2001.034 and §531.0055, and Texas Health and Safety Code §247.025 and §247.026. Texas Government Code §2001.034 authorizes the adoption of emergency rules without prior notice and hearing, if an agency finds that an imminent peril to the public health, safety, or welfare requires adoption of a rule on fewer than 30 days' notice. Texas Government Code §531.0055 authorizes the Executive Commissioner of

HHSC to adopt rules and policies necessary for the operation and provision of health and human services by the health and human services system. Texas Health and Safety Code §247.026 requires the Executive Commissioner of HHSC to adopt rules prescribing minimum standards to protect the health and safety of assisted living residents. Texas Health and Safety Code §247.025 requires the Executive Commissioner of HHSC to adopt rules necessary to implement Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 247 concerning assisted living facilities.

The new section implements Texas Government Code §531.0055 and Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 247.

The agency hereby certifies that the emergency adoption has been reviewed by legal counsel and found to be a valid exercise of the agency's legal authority.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information, please call: (512) 438-3161.

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CHAPTER 553 LICENSING STANDARDS FOR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES
SUBCHAPTER K COVID-19 EMERGENCY RULE

§553.2004. Assisted Living Facility COVID-19 Vaccination Data Reporting and
Emergency Communication System Enrollment.

(a) An assisted living facility manager and one additional designee must enroll in an
emergency communication system in accordance with instructions from the Texas
Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC).

(b) An assisted living facility must respond to requests for information received
through the emergency communication system in the format established by HHSC.

(c) Based on state law and federal guidance, HHSC finds COVID-19 to be a health
and safety risk and, therefore, requires an assisted living facility to, within 24 hours
of completing a round of vaccinations, accurately report COVID-19 vaccination data
for staff and residents to HHSC in the format established by HHSC.