



STATE OF WASHINGTON
HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

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August 15, 2024

Interpretive Statement (IS)

IS Number: IS-24-01

Issuing Entity: Washington State Health Care Authority

Subject Matter: Clarifying requirements in WAC 182-531-1600(9)(b) - Bariatric surgery

Effective Date: August 15, 2024

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OFFICE OF THE CODE REVISER
STATE OF WASHINGTON
FILED

DATE: August 15, 2024

TIME: 3:40 PM

WSR 24-17-067

The Health Care Authority (HCA) is filing this Interpretive Statement (IS) under the authority of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) ([RCW 34.05.230](#)). This IS clarifies HCA's interpretation of [WAC 182-531-1600\(9\)\(b\)](#), specifically who can perform the internal medicine evaluation.

This rule was last updated in 2013 and HCA intends to propose amendments to the rule under the APA (in the near future). The amendments will codify what already is HCA's interpretation and administration of the rule.

For the purpose of WAC 182-531-1600(9)(b) only, HCA interprets the term "*internist*" to include family physicians with or without obstetrics, internal-medicine/pediatric physicians, geriatricians, pediatrics, as well as qualified advance practice providers such as advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants.

The amended rule, as with HCA's current interpretation, will provide greater access to providers, including a client's primary care provider, who can provide equally effective assessments of the client's readiness for surgery.

(9)(b) ~~Undergo an internal medicine evaluation performed by an internist~~ a physical evaluation to assess the client's preoperative condition and mortality risk. Upon completion, the internist provider must forward the results of the evaluation to the agency with the request for initiation of the bariatric surgery program.