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## Assessing extended family exemptions for Individual Providers

### Program background

Long-term care workers help the elderly and persons with disabilities in their homes or in state-licensed residential facilities. A shortage of long-term care workers is well documented in the media, and many believe need is increasing quickly as Baby Boomers age. Individual providers, or IPs, are in-home, long-term care workers for Medicaid-eligible elderly or functionally disabled people. IPs are exempt from some training requirements and certification under certain circumstances, including while exclusively caring for a biological, step, or adoptive child or parent. Extended family members, such as a sister or cousin, are not eligible for this exemption.

An IP with no exemption must complete 75 hours of training and be certified by the Department of Health (DOH) as a “home care aide.” The state pays for both training and certification. An exemption reduces the training requirements (to 35 hours for care of an elderly or disabled child or parent, and to 12 hours for care of a developmentally disabled child or parent), and eliminates the need for certification.

During legislative hearings on previous performance audits addressing long-term care workers in Washington, members of the public said that finding in-home care workers for children or parents is difficult. Many also indicated the certification process was designed for career-path individuals, and is burdensome for family members. They suggested broadening the exemption to extended family members to help alleviate the problems.

### Preliminary scope and objectives

The audit, mandated by Initiative 1163, will examine how current exemptions of some statutory training requirements and certification for IPs might affect the availability of those workers, and the risks and benefits of broadening those exemptions.

This performance audit will seek to answer the following question:

- What is the extent of unmet need for Individual Providers in Washington?
- What are the benefits and risks of broadening exemptions from full training and certification for IPs who are extended family members?

### Timing

We expect to publish the results of this audit by December 2018.

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