

Long-Term Care Premium Collection Delayed Pending Legislative Changes

Governor Jay Inslee is pausing the implementation of WA Cares, the nation's first long-term care support services program, until the Washington state legislature can make changes to the law. Due to take effect on January 1st, Inslee said there are "some areas that need adjustments" that will be addressed in the next legislative session. In a joint [announcement](#) with Senate Majority Leader Any Billig and House Speaker Laurie Jenkins, the Governor said he will use his authority to order the state Employment Security Department "not to collect the premiums from this program from employers."

Delaying the program will allow for improvements to the Fund "so that it can better serve disabled veterans, military spouses, non-residents, and near retirees," according to the Governor. In addition, "a pause will also give the Long Term Care Commission the ability to study and make recommendations about residents who move out of Washington to retire and assure that those who have opted out of the program maintain their private insurance policies." The Governor said employers will not be subject to penalties and interest for not withholding fees from employees' wages while the legislation is under consideration.

In a later [statement](#), the Governor said, "The Legislature will have an opportunity to fix their bill starting on January 10 when they convene for the session. It is my hope that they will do that quickly in order to provide clarity to employees and employers. I have considerable confidence that the Legislature will fix this problem."

The WA Cares Fund website has an employer [notice](#) of the change to the premium collection requirement making it clear that "[e]ach employer will need to decide whether they will implement the law as it stands or await legislative action."