



Chapter 246-110 WAC Contagious Disease
School Districts and Day Care Centers
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Today's presentation

- ▶ Rule description
- ▶ Criteria
- ▶ Stakeholders
- ▶ Changes proposed
- ▶ Comment summary and response

Rule description

- ▶ The rule lists contagious diseases that may affect children in schools and/or day care centers.
- ▶ The rule specifies the steps Health Officers can take to control or eliminate the spread of those diseases.
- ▶ The rule does not list the contagious diseases that require automatic school or childcare exclusion.

In consultation with others Health Officers may

- ▶ Close affected school(s) and/or day care center(s)
- ▶ Close other school(s) and/or day care center(s) within the jurisdiction
- ▶ Exclude students, staff, and volunteers who are infected or susceptible to the disease

Need for update

- ▶ The rule is outdated and no longer reflects best public health practice.
- ▶ The rule needs to be aligned with the notifiable conditions rule.
- ▶ The rule language could be clearer in places.
- ▶ An up to date rule will help prevent transmission of communicable disease to children and staff in day care and school settings.

Criteria

1. Severity of disease
2. Availability of prophylactic measures or medications to mitigate risk (i.e. is there any kind of intervention that can be taken to prevent further spread, disability or death)
3. Can the disease be diagnosed early enough for intervention
4. Particularly harmful for vulnerable population

Criteria (continued)

5. Balancing public health concerns (the risk to other students and staff caused by affected student's presence in school/childcare) with an affected child's right to education/childcare

6. Strength of risk to other students/children and staff

7. Communicability of the disease

Stakeholders include

- ▶ **Local Health Jurisdictions**
- ▶ **State agencies:** Department of Health, Department of Early Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Social and Health Services
- ▶ **Health Professional Groups:** Washington Chapter of American Academy of Pediatricians, Washington Academy of Family Physicians
- ▶ **Education and School affiliated groups:** School Districts, Washington Association of Principals, Washington State School Directors Association, School Nurse Corps, Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, and School Nurse Organization of Washington

Proposed changes for definitions

- ▶ Removes two common conditions – Pediculosis (head lice) and Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- ▶ Adds two conditions– Shiga toxin–producing Escherichia coli and Cryptosporidiosis
- ▶ Reorganizes contagious diseases into 5 categories
- ▶ Adds 2 missing definitions (infectious agent and contaminated)

More proposed changes

- ▶ **Purpose:** Clarified by adding a reference to notifiable condition rule, and by removing recommendations about parents seeking health care services for children, and guiding parents to affordable care.
- ▶ **Control of contagious diseases:** Most changes are clarifying or editorial. Changes consultation with a school district board of directors to school district superintendent, in order not to delay needed actions.

Comments received in 5 areas from 15 individuals

- ▶ Definitions – head lice, Pink eye, Chicken pox, TB, and Diarrheal diseases
- ▶ General
- ▶ Process
- ▶ Health Officer role
- ▶ Other

Summary of comments regarding removal of head lice and pink eye

Cons: Highly contagious, close proximity, discomfort factor, potential costs, and families' reactions

Pros: Exclusion still possible, criteria not met, other disease management strategies possible, and effective use of resources

Our response

- ▶ There appears to be confusion: the rule lists conditions reportable to Health Officers
- ▶ Other disease management policies available
- ▶ American Academy of Pediatrics, CDC, and National Association of School Nurses do not recommend excluding students with head lice
- ▶ These 2 conditions are not in notifiable conditions rule
- ▶ These 2 conditions did not meet our 7 criteria

Two small proposed language revisions

- ▶ Change “medically appropriate” to “appropriate” in WAC 246–110–020 (2)
- ▶ Change “infectious, exposed, or susceptible” to “infectious, or exposed and susceptible” in WAC 246–110–020 (2)(d)