



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH
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August 14, 2013

TO: Michelle Davis, Executive Director
Washington State Board of Health

FROM: ^{M/G} Maryanne Guichard, Assistant Secretary
Division of Environmental Public Health

SUBJECT: RULEMAKING REQUEST – WAC 246-101-010, Definitions within the
notifiable conditions regulations

The Department of Health is requesting the State Board of Health initiate rulemaking to consider changing the definition of “elevated blood lead level” in WAC 246-101-010, Definitions within the notifiable conditions regulations. As part of the rulemaking, the Department of Health would consider the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) blood lead levels for children and adults and edit the definition of “laboratory” for clarity.

In 2012, the CDC revised their guidance on childhood lead levels down to a level of concern of 5 µg/dL. In 2009 they revised their guidance on adult lead down from 25 µg/dL to 10 µg/dL. The change in levels reflects mounting evidence that there is no safe level of lead.

Currently, Washington State’s Notifiable Conditions rules define an elevated blood lead level in children under 16 years of age as ≥ 10 µg/dL and in adults 16 years and older as ≥ 25 µg/dL. The rule requires laboratories to report to the Department of Health all elevated test results within 2 days. Non-elevated results must be reported within thirty days.

A revised rule would require medical laboratories that test for lead to report more results in the 2-day timeframe instead of the 30-day timeframe as more results would be considered elevated. Most laboratories already report blood lead levels with sufficient accuracy to meet the new CDC standard. However, some may need to improve their processes as a result of a rule change.

Local health jurisdictions in King, Pierce, Snohomish, Clark, Whatcom, and Island Counties already use 5.0 µg/dL as the action level for childhood lead and would be

minimally affected by a change to the rule. Other counties may face an increased burden associated with this lower value depending on their case management policies related to investigations of child elevated blood lead levels. Currently counties investigate adult elevated blood lead levels under rare circumstances. This practice would likely not change as a result of a change to the rule.

Please contact Rad Cunningham, 360-236-3359 or rad.cunningham@doh.wa.gov if you have any questions.

cc: Rad Cunningham, Department of Health
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