



DATE: November 12, 2014

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members

FROM: Diana Yu, Board Member

SUBJECT: BRIEFING ANENCEPHALY CLUSTER BRIEFING

Background and Summary:

Anencephaly is a rare but serious birth defect that affects the development of a baby's brain and skull. Almost all babies with anencephaly are still-born or die shortly after birth. Although rare, anencephaly is occurring at a national rate of about 2 in 10,000 births. In the last few years, due to higher than expected rates of birth involving anencephaly and other neural tube defects, some counties in central Washington, with assistance from the Washington State Department of Health have been investigating the cluster.

Cathy Wasserman, State Epidemiologist with the Washington State Department of Health, is here today to provide a briefing to the Board on the Department's investigation, surveillance and prevention activities related to anencephaly in central Washington.

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