

WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

Date: November 9, 2020

To: Washington State Board of Health Members

From: Bob Lutz, MD, MPH, Board Member

Subject: Briefing – Chapter 246-680 WAC, Prenatal Tests-Congenital and Heritable Disorders

Background and Summary:

The Washington State Board of Health (Board) has the authority under RCW 48.21.244, RCW 48.44.344, and RCW 48.46.375 to set standards for screening and diagnostic procedures covered by group disability contracts, group health care services contracts, and group health maintenance agreements.

The current rule outlines screening and diagnostic tests that are considered to be medically necessary and are required to be included in benefits packages provided by certain insurers, health care service contractors, and health maintenance organizations. Prenatal screening and diagnostic testing can have a significant impact on pregnancies at risk for a genetic condition by enabling early diagnosis, providing an opportunity for appropriate health care, and empowering women and couples to make informed pregnancy related health decisions. Since the last rule update in 2003, national organizations such as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American College of Medical Genetics have put forward updated recommendations for prenatal screening and diagnostic testing. Cell free fetal DNA (cfDNA) or non-invasive prenatal screening has become common practice, along with expanded carrier screening and pre-natal chromosomal microarray analysis.

The State Board of Health (Board), in collaboration with the Department of Health (Department), worked to draft updates to chapter 246-680 WAC to bring Washington's rules into alignment with national standards of care and current best practices, as well as improving the clarity and usability of the rule. The proposed rule modernizes the pre-natal screening and diagnostic tests for congenital and heritable disorders that are required to be covered by insurers covered by this rule. The proposed rule includes new test requirements as well as eliminates or updates criteria for coverage of certain tests, for example age.

An informal comment period was conducted in June 2019 and staff have since worked to assess comments and incorporate changes. Due to staff vacancies, progress was put on hold until spring 2020 when work continued on the proposed rule and associated analysis.

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I have invited Samantha Pskowski, Policy Advisor to the Board, to provide an update on the rule timeline, details on the proposed changes, and share next steps.

Staff

Samantha Pskowski

To request this document in an alternate format or a different language, please contact Kelie Kahler, Washington State Board of Health Communication Manager, at 360-236-4102 or by email at kelie.kahler@sboh.wa.gov. TTY users can dial 711.

PO Box 47990 • Olympia, WA 98504-7990
360-236-4110 • wsboh@sboh.wa.gov • sboh.wa.gov