

WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

Date: April 10, 2024

To: Washington State Board of Health Members

From: Dimyana Abdelmalek, Board Member

Subject: Notifiable Conditions Implementation Update – Chapter 246-101 WAC

Background and Summary:

Chapter 246-101 WAC, Notifiable Conditions, provides critical information to public health officials to aid them in protecting and improving public health through disease prevention and control. The rule outlines the information that healthcare providers, facilities, laboratories, and other entities must report to public health officials so they can identify and track communicable diseases and other conditions. This is required under RCW 43.20.050, 70.104.055, and 43.70.545.

The State Board of Health (Board) and Washington State Department of Health (Department) recently engaged in emergency and permanent rulemaking to update Chapter 246-101 WAC. This rulemaking was initiated in 2017 and the final updated rules went into effect on January 1, 2023. Updates to the rule included:

- Adding notification and specimen submission requirements for “new conditions” and conditions currently identified as “other rare diseases of public health significance;”
- Updating and clarifying notification and specimen submission requirements for certain existing conditions;
- Clarifying and improving requirements for suspected cases;
- Adding requirements to report race, ethnicity, and preferred language;
- Revising the reporting requirements for veterinarians and the Department of Agriculture;
- Adding enhanced service facilities licensed under chapter 70.97 RCW to the definition of “health care facility;”
- Editorial revisions consistent with statutory changes made during the 2020 legislative session (Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1551, Modernizing the control of certain communicable diseases);
- Updating statutory references in the rules, including updated references to the Security and Confidentiality Guidelines developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and
- Improving overall clarity and usability of the chapter.

The primary goals of this rule update were to collect data on an additional set of conditions not formerly included in the rules, collect better and more relevant data for

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the new conditions, as well as those already included in the rules, and to streamline the rule language, to make it more readable and user friendly. In the implementation plan for this recent rule update, the Department and Board stated they would track if these goals were being met by monitoring 1) the completeness of case reports and laboratory reports that are submitted; and 2) reporting gaps among regulated entities who should be reporting.

I've invited Scott Lindquist, State Epidemiologist for the Department of Health, to brief the Board on the recent implementation of the amended notifiable conditions rule. This is an informational briefing involving no Board action.

Staff

Molly Dinardo

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