

## Washington State Board of Health Update, cont'd pg 2

At the November 10, 2021 meeting, the Washington State Board of Health (Board) accepted the Department of Health's (DOH) request to amend the effective date of the notifiable conditions rule ([chapter 246-101 WAC](#)). The Board also directed staff to file a new CR-103, Order of Adoption, to delay the effective date of revisions to the notifiable conditions chapter to January 1, 2023.

The notifiable conditions rule outlines requirements for information health care providers, health care facilities, laboratories, and other entities that must report to the state to protect the public's health by tracking communicable diseases and other conditions.

Last March, the Board adopted amendments to the notifiable conditions rule. The amended rule makes significant changes to the requirements of the chapter and was originally adopted with an effective date of January 31, 2022. DOH greatly appreciates the engagement of many community partners to update the notifiable conditions rule. The disaggregated race and ethnicity categories, as well as the patients preferred language categories, will provide vital data to identify health inequity and work to improve the health of all people.

As DOH began work to implement the notifiable conditions rule, we identified technical challenges that prevent the work from being completed by the original effective date in regulation, including:

- The capacity of DOH's IT staff and communicable disease staff to update the 19 IT systems needed to implement the new rule has been impeded by the

relentless demands of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The technology solution for the Washington State Public Health Laboratories to incorporate additional demographic values will take significant time beyond the original rule effective date. When implemented, this change will streamline the reporting process.
- The Washington State Legislature passed House Bill 1272 (2021), an Act Relating to Health Care System Transparency. This bill requires DOH to update Washington's Comprehensive Hospital Abstract Reporting System (CHARS). HB 1272 impacts DOH IT systems and requires the collection of similar demographic data to what is required by the notifiable conditions rule. The effective date for HB 1272 is January 1, 2023.

The newly adopted effective date of January 1, 2023 will allow DOH to align with the implementation work required by HB 1272 and provide enough time to successfully complete this critical public health work. DOH is working to update the timeline for implementation continued on page 2

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### Practice Guidelines

The following practice guidelines have been developed by the Clinical Laboratory Advisory Council. They can be accessed at the [LQA website](#).

Acute Diarrhea	Lipid Screening
Anemia	PAP Smear Referral
ANA	Point-of-Care Testing
Bioterrorism Event Mgmt	PSA
Bleeding Disorders	Rash Illness
Chlamydia	Red Cell Transfusion
Diabetes	Renal Disease
Group A Strep Pharyngitis	STD
Group B Streptococcus	Thyroid
Hepatitis	Tuberculosis
HIV	Urinalysis
Infectious Diarrhea	Wellness
Intestinal Parasites	

# Washington State Board of Health Update

and will coordinate with the Board to provide information, guidance documents, updated forms, and training as it becomes available.

More information about the Notifiable Conditions rulemaking can be found on the [Board's rulemaking webpage](#). Please direct any questions to [notifiableconditions@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:notifiableconditions@sboh.wa.gov).

## CDC Updates Childhood Blood Lead Level Reference Values

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently updated their [blood lead reference value](#) (BLRV) for children from 5.0 µg/dL to 3.5 µg/dL in response to the [Lead Exposure Prevention Committee](#) (LEPAC) recommendation. The blood lead reference value is based on a recent population-based survey, NHANES, which identified a reduction in the 97.5th percentile of the blood lead level (BLL) distribution in U.S. children ages 1-5 years. Children with blood lead levels at or above the BLRV represent those at the top 2.5% with the highest blood lead levels. No safe blood lead level in children has been identified.

### What is the BLRV and does the change impact Washington State?

The BLRV is a population-based measurement that identi-

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fies children with higher lead levels in their blood compared to most U.S. children. It is not a health-based standard, a toxicity threshold, or a requirement for intervention at an individual patient level.

- CDC's recommendation does not automatically change the guidelines for Washington. An elevated blood lead level (EBLL) for children in Washington is still defined as  $\geq 5$  µg/dL.
- Changing the Washington elevated blood lead level may be possible in the future but would require an update to the Washington State Notifiable Conditions Rule in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). This would be a lengthy process.
- Local health jurisdictions will continue to receive all childhood blood lead test results that are considered elevated ( $\geq 5$  µg/dL).

### What does this mean for medical providers and laboratories?

At this time, DOH is recommending that medical providers continue to follow the [current lead recommendations](#) for children in Washington state until further notice. All children enrolled in Medicaid are required to receive blood lead tests at 12 months and 24 months or once between 24 and 72 months if they have no record of a previous lead test.

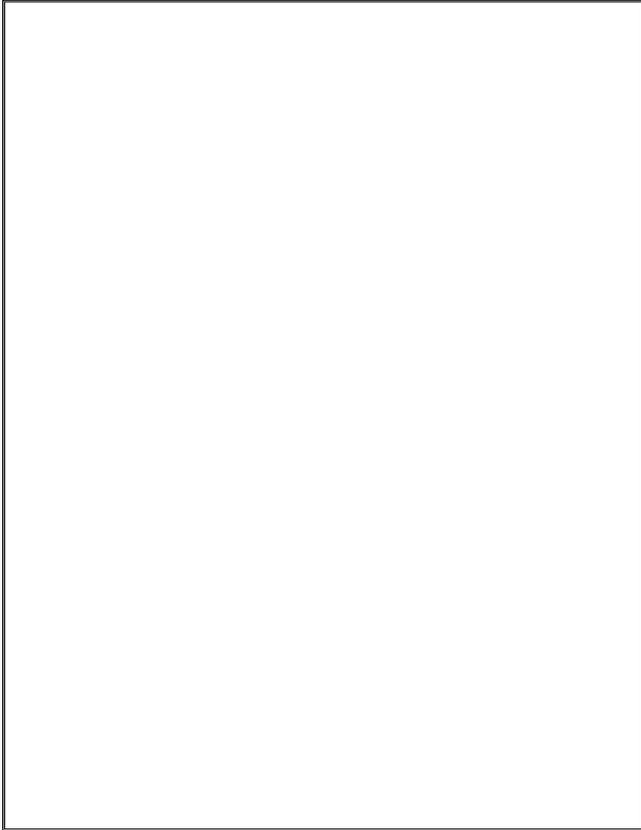
Labs, including clinics using point-of-care lead testing devices, are still required to report all test results to DOH and to report all elevated test results  $\geq 5$  µg/dL to DOH within 2 business days and all other test results within 30 days.

### Additional information

For more information contact: Elisabeth Long, [elisabeth.long@doh.wa.gov](mailto:elisabeth.long@doh.wa.gov)

### Additional resources

[Blood Level Reference Value](#)  
[Recommended Actions Based on Blood Lead Level](#)  
[Standard Surveillance Definitions and Classifications](#)



### Calendar of Events

**Calendar of Events:**

**2022 Virtual Joint Spring Seminar  
April 20-22**

**2022 NWMLS  
October (dates TBD)**

**2022 Clinical Laboratory Conference  
November (dates TBD)**

Contact information for the events listed above can be found on page 2. The Calendar of Events is a list of upcoming conferences, deadlines, and other dates of interest to the clinical laboratory community. If you have events that you would like to have included, please mail them to ELABORATIONS at the address on page 2. Information must be received at least one month before the scheduled event. The editor reserves the right to make final decisions on inclusion.



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For persons with disabilities, this document is available upon request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TTY/TDD 1-800-833-6388).