



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
*Olympia, Washington 98504*

June 8, 2020

Dear Lab Directors/Managers and Clinical Partners:

Our state and nation are in unprecedented times and we appreciate all you are doing and have done to help combat the COVID-19 pandemic. You are on the front lines treating the disease and ensuring testing can occur to keep people safe. As of May 31, there are 365,272 people in Washington state who have been tested for COVID-19. Of those, 21,977 people (or 6.0%) have tested positive for COVID-19. Of those, 1,124 people (or 5.1%) have died of the disease. These statistics highlight the need to continue our efforts efficiently and effectively.

Your partners in public health are working hard to conduct essential case investigations with those who have tested positive and contact interviews with those who have been exposed to someone while they were infectious. These essential public health tools are important to slow and prevent the spread of COVID-19. They are also a key part of being able to open more businesses and allowing people to be active in public settings.

For these tools to be more effective we need your help. Currently, many of the lab records public health receives to conduct case and contact interviews are missing key patient demographic information. This causes delays in starting interviews as staff must first search other data sources to find contact information for the patient. This, in turn, delays the ability to start contact tracing and prevent potential further exposures. It also hampers surveillance and health equity work as reports often lack age, gender, race or ethnicity of the patient. Race and ethnicity data are critical to documenting testing and positive case disparities, which would help public health, improve testing capabilities in underserved populations and better target prevention efforts. WAC 246-101-315 and 246-101-225 allows the state health officer to require other information to be reported. We are, therefore, requesting that race and ethnicity be added to the data fields already required by these sections.

**Labs and Providers can assist by submitting data as required under WAC 246-101:**

- If you are a clinical provider ordering a lab test or entering other data into your electronic medical record that may come to public health as a case report, please ensure you provide all the patient contact information and demographics (name, date of birth, gender, race, ethnicity, full address, phone number). If you or your organization are interested in electronic case reporting, please contact us at [ecr@doh.wa.gov](mailto:ecr@doh.wa.gov) for more information. Until you establish electronic reporting with the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), you must fax results to the county of the patient's residence.

Lab Directors/Managers and Clinical Partners

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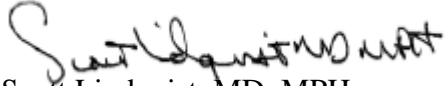
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- If you are a lab either performing the test or referring a test on to another lab, please ensure that all the demographic information referenced above is sent as part of any lab result. Please ensure you submit the data electronically to DOH to ensure staff can avoid hand entry and begin case interviews quickly. To sign up for electronic reporting, please contact [ELR@doh.wa.gov](mailto:ELR@doh.wa.gov). Until you establish electronic reporting with DOH, you must fax results to the county of the patient's residence.

Thank you for your critical role in reporting diseases in Washington state. For general information on lab reporting please go to <https://www.doh.wa.gov/ForPublicHealthandHealthcareProviders/ClinicalLaboratoryReporting>.

If you have any questions, please send an email to [doh-ncov-epi@doh.wa.gov](mailto:doh-ncov-epi@doh.wa.gov).

Sincerely,



Scott Lindquist, MD, MPH  
State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases  
Deputy Health Officer