



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Olympia, Washington 98504

## NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF POLICY STATEMENT

**Title of Policy Statement:** Electronic Signatures for Counseling Disclosure Statements during the COVID-19 Declared Emergency| Policy Number: BH-052620.1

**Issuing Entity:** Department of Health

**Subject Matter:** Clarifying the Department of Health's (department) position on using electronic signatures for counseling disclosure statements. The department has extended the policy allowing use of electronic signatures until 90 days after the end of the COVID-19 declared emergency.

**Effective Date:** 7/1/21

**Contact Person:** U. James Chaney, Executive Director  
[ulysses.chaney@doh.wa.gov](mailto:ulysses.chaney@doh.wa.gov)  
(360) 236-2831

OFFICE OF THE CODE REVISER  
STATE OF WASHINGTON  
FILED

**DATE:** July 16, 2021

**TIME:** 8:24 AM

**WSR 21-15-068**

Department of Health  
Health Systems Quality Assurance  
**Policy Statement**

Revised – 10/18/11

<b>Title:</b>	Electronic Signatures for Counseling Disclosure Statements during the COVID-19 Declared Emergency.	<b>Number:</b> BH-052620.1
<b>References:</b>	<a href="#">RCW 18.19.060</a> , <a href="#">RCW 18.205.060</a> , <a href="#">RCW 18.225.100</a> , <a href="#">WAC 246-809-700</a> , <a href="#">WAC 246-809-710</a> , <a href="#">WAC 246-810-031</a> , and <a href="#">WAC 246-811-100</a> .	
<b>Contact:</b>	U. James Chaney, Executive Director	
<b>Phone:</b>	(360) 236-2831	
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:ulysses.chaney@doh.wa.gov">ulysses.chaney@doh.wa.gov</a>	
<b>Effective Date:</b>	7/1/21	
<b>Supersedes:</b>	BH-052620, Effective May 26, 2020	
<b>Approved By:</b>	Christie Spice, Acting Assistant Secretary	

It is the Department of Health’s (department) position that the requirement to obtain a signed and dated counseling disclosure statement may be satisfied by an electronic signature during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) declared emergency and subsequent 90-day period. This position will remain in effect until withdrawn by the department or until 90 days after the Governor issues a proclamation declaring the termination of the state of emergency declared by Proclamation 20-05, as amended by any subsequent amendatory proclamations, whichever is earlier.

Health professionals licensed under [chapter 18.19 RCW](#) (except agency affiliated counselors), [chapter 18.205 RCW](#), and [chapter 18.225 RCW](#) are required to provide patients with accurate disclosure information about the practice, the health professional's education and training, the extent of confidentiality, and other information in accordance with [RCW 18.19.060](#), [RCW 18.205.060\(15\)](#) as established in [WAC 246-811-100](#) and [RCW 18.225.100](#). The disclosure must be acknowledged in writing by both the client and the licensed health professional.

In order to facilitate social distancing and telehealth during the COVID-19 declared emergency, it is the department's position that the requirement to sign a disclosure statement may be satisfied by an electronic signature. After termination of the COVID-19 declared emergency, use of electronic signatures may continue for the subsequent 90 days to allow adequate time for impacted professionals to transition away from use of electronic signatures. Professions in which disclosure statements may be signed electronically include:

- Advanced social workers, under [WAC 246-809-700](#) and [WAC 246-809-710\(3\)](#)
- Certified advisors, under [WAC 246-810-031\(2\)\(m\)](#)
- Certified counselors, under [WAC 246-810-031\(2\)\(m\)](#)
- Hypnotherapists, under [WAC 246-810-031\(2\)\(m\)](#)
- Independent clinical social workers, under [WAC 246-809-710\(3\)](#)
- Marriage and family therapists, under [WAC 246-809-700](#) and [WAC 246-809-710\(3\)](#)
- Mental health counselors, under [WAC 246-809-700](#) and [WAC 246-809-710\(3\)](#)

- Substance use disorder professionals and substance use disorder professional trainees, under [WAC 246-811-100\(2\)](#)

In summary, it is the department's position that electronic signatures may be used to complete disclosure statements for health professions licensed under [chapter 18.19 RCW](#) (except agency affiliated counselors), [chapter 18.205 RCW](#), and [chapter 18.225 RCW](#) during the COVID-19 declared emergency and subsequent 90-day period.