



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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August 9, 2016

Dear Laboratory Directors, Managers, and Staff,

I am writing to you today to introduce myself and open a dialogue with our Washington State clinical laboratories around notifiable conditions. My name is Scott Lindquist and I am the Washington State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases. As a member of the Office of the State Health Officer, I provide leadership in epidemiologic oversight and consultation to department programs, other agencies and local health jurisdictions involved in preventing and reducing communicable diseases.

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH), in partnership with county and tribal health jurisdictions, is planning to implement a new electronic disease notification tracking system termed the Washington Disease Reporting System (WDRS) with a planned roll out in April 2017. The success of this new system is dependent upon the data provided by clinical laboratories, healthcare providers, healthcare facilities, DOH programs and local health jurisdictions. Electronic transmission of data will be a key emphasis of our efforts to modernize our disease surveillance and better support our efforts to create a safer and healthier Washington.

Electronic Laboratory Reporting – An Important Investment in Washington’s Future

Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR) provides a standardized transmission of notifiable lab results from clinical laboratories to the public health jurisdictions responsible for conducting case investigations. Many of you may already be working towards ELR as part of Meaningful Use (MU) or to maximize reporting efficiency. I have attached a brief overview of ELR in Washington State, including a link to the current notifiable conditions reporting requirement for your reference.

I believe that the efficiencies gained through ELR are essential to helping us prevent and reduce communicable diseases, and I am advocating for this to be the standard for notifiable condition laboratory reporting in our state. I am currently leading work to revise and update our Washington Administrative Code (WAC) for notifiable conditions. We are planning to make updates to language, adding new conditions, and adding the requirement for mandatory Electronic Laboratory Reporting. While WAC changes, including an ELR requirement, may be many months away, I wanted to notify you as soon as possible regarding our intention.

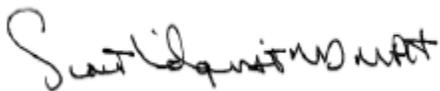
DOH and Clinical Laboratories – A Vital Partnership

Creating a safer and healthier Washington requires partnership across every aspect of the healthcare community and I would like to take this opportunity to deepen our partnership with you.

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To that end, we are working on creating a section on our [DOH webpage](#) that would be a one-stop resource for notifiable condition reporting questions, ELR and other important public health issues that affect clinical laboratories. We will also be including articles in upcoming **Elaborations** newsletters to provide additional notifiable condition reporting guidance regarding existing and emerging conditions. Please let me know if there are any topics you would like to see addressed or questions you may have regarding notifiable condition reporting. I welcome your valuable feedback and invite you to **contact me directly** via email, office phone or my cell phone/text.

In closing, I wanted to sincerely express my appreciation for your contribution to public health. The work you do is critical to our ability to serve our state's public health needs. On a personal note, as a practicing infectious disease doctor, I also wanted to express my gratitude for the wide availability of quality lab testing here in Washington – I am sure I have used many of your labs throughout the years and my patients, in addition to patients throughout Washington, have been positively impacted by your important work.



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Attachment

Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR) in Washington State

Public Health Reporting of Electronic Data (PHRED) is the secure electronic reporting system for notifiable conditions in Washington State. Since 2006, laboratories and hospitals have sent notifiable condition results, case reports, and other data to PHRED. The data is processed, and individualized electronic reports are created for the programs that have legal responsibility for conducting case investigations around these health events, including local health jurisdictions and several Washington State Department of Health (DOH) programs.

Please note that while PHRED reporting is highly reliable and efficient, electronic reporting through PHRED **does not** meet immediate reporting requirements as specified by Washington State law. Therefore, even if a laboratory is participating in ELR, all results that are immediately notifiable **must** continue to be reported by phone.

If you are a hospital laboratory certified for Meaningful Use (MU) and are interested in complying with the reportable results objective for MU, please visit our website: www.doh.wa.gov/healthIT. This document does not address requirements for MU.

Submission Methods

There are two methods available for sending notifiable results to PHRED, by a Web Submitter Application, or by HL7 messaging.

Web Submitter Application:

To submit data by this method, laboratories simply log in to a secure, reliable DOH website and manually enter reports. This method is ideal for laboratories that have only a small number of reportable results, and who desire a low-tech solution. Training will be required to use the application.

Health Level Seven (HL7) Messaging:

DOH can accept HL7 lab results messages in the version 2 standard, up to and including version 2.5.1. Use of standard codes, e.g. LOINC and SNOMED, is strongly preferred but not required. The agency supports 3 methods of HL7 data transport: HIE, SFT and PHINMS.

Washington State Health Information Exchange (HIE)

The Washington State Department of Health's preferred method of data transport is the Washington State Health Information Exchange (HIE) administered by OneHealthPort. All Medicaid eligible hospitals participating in Meaningful Use, as well as laboratories and vendors submitting Meaningful Use data on behalf of a Medicaid eligible hospital, are required to report ELR data to the agency via the HIE.



Secure File Transfer (SFT)

Washington State Consolidated Technology Services (CTS) supports a secure file transfer host from Axway. Our preferred protocol is based on HTTPS, but other secure FTP protocols are also supported. Most secure file transport clients can securely send data to the DOH via the CTS host.

Public Health Information Network Messaging System (PHINMS)

PHINMS is the public health standard for reporting to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is a standard for national laboratories reporting to states. The software is freely available from the CDC.

Please visit the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) for the rules around laboratory notifiable conditions:

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC>

[246-101-201](#) Notifiable conditions and laboratories.

[246-101-205](#) Responsibilities and duties of the laboratory director.

[246-101-210](#) Means of specimen submission.

[246-101-215](#) Content of documentation accompanying specimen submission.

[246-101-220](#) Means of notification for positive preliminary test results and positive final test results.

[246-101-225](#) Content of notifications for positive preliminary test results and positive final test results.

For questions or to sign up for Electronic Laboratory Reporting please contact ELR@doh.wa.gov