



Public Health
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Region IV Public Health
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties
and Cowlitz Tribe

Health Advisory

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each provider in your organization.

Thank you

Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH
Health Officer

Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH
Deputy Health Officer

Clark County Public Health
Cowlitz County Health Department
Skamania County Health Department
Wahkiakum County Department of Health and Human Services
(360) 397-8412
Please Distribute

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



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HEALTH ADVISORY

January 11, 2010

The purpose of this advisory is to inform healthcare providers about Washington Administrative Code (WAC) changes affecting provider care for HIV/AIDS in 2010

New regulations effective January 16, 2010 change healthcare provider responsibilities toward sexual or needle sharing partners of persons newly diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Changes affect partner notification, laboratory screening and reporting, and counseling standards. The following tables compare old rules with new ones. Following the tables is a more detailed summary of these changes. Please also review the amended WACs at http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/HIV_AIDS/Prev_Edu/policyreview.htm.

Partner notification (WAC 246-100-036 and WAC 246-100-072)

Previous Rule	Effective January 16, 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health care providers could conduct partner notification for HIV-infected individuals. ○ Public Health was required to contact partners within seven days of receiving report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Only</u> Public Health will provide partner notification services. ○ Public Health will attempt to contact the principal healthcare provider within three working days upon receiving a report of previously unreported case of HIV infection to assess best means of conducting Partner Notification.

Ordering laboratory screening and reporting (WAC 246-100-207)

Previous Rule	Effective January 16, 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All health care providers were required to offer pre-test counseling. ○ Health care providers were not required to refer patients to Public Health for post-test counseling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If a person gives consent for a panel of tests that includes an HIV test, the health care provider shall ensure that the person is specifically informed verbally or in writing that an HIV test is included in the panel. ○ Health care providers are required to offer patients opportunity to ask questions about HIV testing. ○ Health care providers are no longer required to offer pre-test counseling. ○ If the HIV test is positive, provide the name of the individual and locating information to Public Health for post-test counseling

Counseling standards (WAC 246-100-208)

Previous Rule	Effective January 16, 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If a pregnant woman refuses to consent to HIV test, health care providers were not required to discuss the reasons for refusal and were not required to document in medical record. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health care providers are required to offer pregnant women the opportunity to ask questions about HIV testing and to provide HIV testing unless the pregnant woman refuses to give consent. ○ If a pregnant woman refuses to consent to an HIV test, health care providers are required to discuss her reasons for refusal and document in the medical record.

Summary of WAC changes affecting provider care for HIV/AIDS in 2010

Partner notification (WAC 246-100-036 and WAC 246-100-072)

- The principal healthcare provider shall inform the HIV-infected person that Public Health will contact the HIV-infected person to provide assistance with partner notification, post test counseling, and referral to appropriate support services.
- Healthcare providers no longer have the option of providing partner notification exclusively. Public Health will initiate contact newly diagnosed persons and attempt to notify their partners after receiving the case report.
- Public Health will attempt to contact the principal healthcare provider within three working days (previously seven days) upon receiving a report of previously unreported case of HIV infection to assess best means of conducting Partner Notification.

The rule for reporting HIV cases remains unchanged. Providers must report new cases to Public Health within three days.

Ordering laboratory screening and reporting (WAC 246-100-207)

Any person ordering an HIV test will:

- Obtain the informed consent of the person being tested. If a person gives consent for a panel of tests that includes an HIV test, the health care provider shall ensure that the person is specifically informed verbally or in writing that an HIV test is included in the panel.
- Offer the person an opportunity to ask questions about HIV testing.
- Offer the person an opportunity to decline testing.
- If the HIV test is positive, provide the name of the individual and locating information to Public Health for post-test counseling as required by WAC 246-100-209.

The requirement for health care providers to offer or refer for pretest counseling is eliminated.

Counseling standards (WAC-246-100-208)

- Principal healthcare providers shall counsel or ensure that HIV/AIDS counseling as defined in WAC 246-100-011 (2) is provided to all HIV-positive pregnant women continuing their pregnancies.
- The principal healthcare provider shall obtain informed consent of the pregnant woman, either for a separate HIV test or for a panel of tests that includes an HIV test, and:
 - Offer the pregnant woman an opportunity to ask questions and provide testing unless the pregnant woman refuses to give consent.
 - If a pregnant woman refuses to give consent for HIV testing, then discuss her reasons for refusal and document in medical record.

Screening and reporting changes noted above—(WAC 246-100-036; WAC 246-100-072; WAC 246-100-207) also apply to HIV-positive pregnant women.

If you have any questions about these new regulations feel free to call me at (360) 397-8412 or call David Heal, HIV program manager, at (360) 397-8086.

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH
Region IV Health Officer