



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

March 19, 2020

Dear Local Health Officers and Hospital Administrators:

On February 29, 2020, in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in Washington State, Governor Jay Inslee declared a State of Emergency. See [Proclamation 20-05](#). On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization classified the global spread of COVID-19 as a pandemic, and urged all governments throughout the world to take action to stem the spread of the disease.

WAC 246-101-301 and -305 require healthcare facilities, including hospitals, to immediately report all confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases as an emerging condition with outbreak potential and a rare disease of public health significance. Specifically, all hospitals licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW are required to immediately submit reports of all inpatient and observation visits with a laboratory-confirmed or suspected diagnosis of COVID-19 to the Washington State Department of Health. Laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 visits include any patient with an inpatient admission that has a positive laboratory test for SARS-CoV-2.

Since all hospitals are extremely busy at this time, we have developed an approach that allows hospitals that participate in RHINO to easily meet this reporting requirement. Hospitals that do not participate in RHINO will need to submit daily admission reports on COVID-19 patients. These two approaches are described here.

Approach 1: Hospitals that participate in the Rapid Health Information Network (RHINO) program can submit COVID-19 reports by modifying their current data feed so that ALL records submitted to the RHINO system contain full patient name and full patient date of birth. These fields will allow us to link COVID-19 laboratory test results we are receiving to patient hospitalization records to identify your cases. In addition, as soon as possible, please add the additional variables to your RHINO data feeds:

- a) Patient physical address including zip code;
- b) Patient sex;
- c) Patient best contact telephone number;
- d) Patient email;
- e) Patient occupation
- f) Patient employer
- g) Symptom onset;
- h) Clinical features;
- i) Initial measured temperature at facility;

- j) Pregnancy status;
- k) Hospital name;
- l) Hospital arrival date/time;
- m) Discharge date/time;
- n) ICU status;
- o) Mechanical ventilation;
- p) Death;
- q) Death date;

Approach 2: Hospitals that do not participate in the RHINO program are asked to submit daily inpatient admission reports using a designated Department of Health protocol. Data will be transferred electronically through a secure transfer protocol. Hospitals will be asked to meet minimum data element requirements defined by the Department of Health which will include, but are not limited to:

- a) Patient first and last name;
- b) Patient physical address including zip code;
- c) Patient date of birth;
- d) Patient sex;
- e) Patient best contact telephone number;
- f) Patient email;
- g) Patient occupation
- h) Patient employer
- i) Symptom onset;
- j) Clinical features;
- k) Pregnancy status;
- l) Hospital name;
- m) Hospital admission date/time;
- n) Discharge date/time;
- o) Death;
- p) Death date;

Hospitals must comply with the requirements for the handling of case reports and medical information described in WAC 246-101-320.

We have included technical guidance on how to adhere to reporting requirements via RHINO, and we will be holding a webinar for information technology staff to answer questions they may have. We will also work directly with hospitals that do not participate in the RHINO program to provide guidelines for reporting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Lofy". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Kathy Lofy, MD
State Health Officer
Washington State Department of Health

Enclosures

Cc: Local Health Officers