RULE-MAKING ORDER
PERMANENT RULE ONLY

CR-103P (December 2017)
(Implements RCW 34.05.360)

CODE REVISER USE ONLY

OFFICE OF THE CODE REVISER
STATE OF WASHINGTON
FILED

DATE: September 03, 2026
TIME: 1:53 PM

WSR 26-19-011

Agency: Department of Health

Effective date of rule:

Permanent Rules

☐ 31 days after filing.

☒ Other (specify) WAC 246-460-001, WAC 246-460-010, WAC 246-460-020, WAC 246-460-030, WAC 246-460-040, WAC 246-460-050 and WAC 246-460-060 become effective 31 days after filing. WAC 246-460-070 becomes effective July 1, 2028.

(If less than 31 days after filing, a specific finding under RCW 34.05.380(3) is required and should be stated below)

Any other findings required by other provisions of law as precondition to adoption or effectiveness of rule?

☐ Yes ☒ No If Yes, explain:

Purpose: Hospital emergency department patient care information reporting, new chapter 246-460 WAC. Commonly referred to as RHINO (Rapid Health Information Network). The Department of Health (department) has adopted a new chapter of rule, Chapter 246-460 WAC, that requires hospitals with emergency departments and stand-alone emergency departments regulated under RCW 43.70.050, and other voluntary parties to submit to the department data necessary for the department to respond to emerging public health threats and chronic conditions affecting public health. Required and voluntary data submitters are required to follow the department's messaging guide for submission parameters to the Rapid Health Information NetwOrk (RHINO) program, which administers the collection, analysis, and sharing of this data set.

Citation of rules affected by this order:

New:WAC 246-460-001, WAC 246-460-010, WAC 246-460-020, WAC 246-460-030, WAC 246-460-040, WAC 246-460-050, WAC 246-460-060, and WAC 246-460-070

Repealed: None

Amended: None

Suspended: None

Statutory authority for adoption: RCW 43.70.057

Other authority: None

PERMANENT RULE (Including Expedited Rule Making)

Adopted under notice filed as WSR 26-07-069 on March 17, 2026.

Describe any changes other than editing from proposed to adopted version:

The department made the following non significant clarifying changes in the adopted rule based on feedback from interested parties, and internal review during the formal comment period.

WAC 246-460-010 Definitions, subsection (10) "messaging guide" was changed to include "Version 1.7" with the publication number and to remove the language "including all subsequent updates." Language was added to clarify certain administrative changes the department may update in the messaging guide without updating the version number. The word "refers to" was also changed to "means" to reflect standard drafting practice.

WAC 246-460-010 Definitions, subsection (8) "Human research review board" the word "is" was changed to "means" to reflect standard drafting practice.

In WAC 246-460-030 Submission of data elements and messages, subsection (1) was changed to remove language stating that the department may require additional information not listed in the messaging guide to successfully process data. The reason for this change is that the data elements to be initially collected are defined by RCW 43.70.057 to include, but are not limited to, data elements identifying facility information, limited patient identifiers, patient demographics, and encounter, clinical, and laboratory information. Changes to data element

requirements in the messaging guide may only be made to align with current or emerging national standards for reporting similar data and must minimize administrative burden and costs.

WAC 246-460-030 Submission of data elements and messages, subsection (5) was changed to add the words "only" and "the" to clarify that the department may require submitters to provide additional information "only" for "the" purposes of validating data elements received, verifying accuracy, and conducting surveillance of and addressing potential public health threats.

If a preliminary cost-benefit analysis was prepared under RCW 34.05.328, a final cost-benefit analysis is available by contacting:

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Web site: Rule Making for RHINO Data Reporting | Washington State Department of Health
Other:

Note: If any category is left blank, it will be calculated as zero. No descriptive text.

Count by whole WAC sections only, from the WAC number through the history note. A section may be counted in more than one category.

The number of sections adopted in order to comply with:

Federal statute:	New	0	Amended	0	Repealed	0
Federal rules or standards:	New	0	Amended	0	Repealed	0
Recently enacted state statutes:	New	8	Amended	0	Repealed	0

The number of sections adopted at the request of a nongovernmental entity:

New	0	Amended	0	Repealed	0

The number of sections adopted on the agency's own initiative:

New	0	Amended	0	Repealed	0

The number of sections adopted in order to clarify, streamline, or reform agency procedures:

New	0	Amended	0	Repealed	0

The number of sections adopted using:

Negotiated rule making:	New	0	Amended	0	Repealed	0
Pilot rule making:	New	0	Amended	0	Repealed	0
Other alternative rule making:	New	8	Amended	0	Repealed	0

Date Adopted: 9/3/2026

Name: Kristin Peterson, JD for Dennis E. Worsham

Title: Chief of Policy for Secretary of Health

Signature:

Chapter 246-460 WAC
HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PATIENT CARE INFORMATION REPORTING

NEW SECTION

WAC 246-460-001 Purpose. This chapter implements RCW 43.70.057 relating to collection, maintenance, analysis, and dissemination of emergency room patient care information. The information collected supports the department's ability to be fully informed of and to respond to emerging public health threats and chronic conditions that may impact the health of the people of Washington.

NEW SECTION

WAC 246-460-010 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

(1) "Custom data product" means a specialized data file or data report created and released by the department.

(2) "Data element" means patient care visit information collected from a health care facility under the authority of RCW 43.70.057 that is part of a patient encounter, including required and optional patient care visit information.

(3) "Data sharing agreement" means a recorded understanding that memorializes what data is being shared and how it can be used including, but not limited to, a contract, service level agreement, or dedicated data sharing agreement.

(4) "Department" means the Washington state department of health.

(5) "Electronic health record" means an electronic version of a patient's medical history that is maintained by a health care provider.

(6) "Emergency department" means the area of a hospital where unscheduled medical or surgical care is provided to patients.

(7) "Hospital" means any health care institution which is licensed under chapters 70.41 RCW and 246-320 WAC.

(8) "Human research review board" means the standing institutional review board operating under chapter 42.48 RCW.

(9) "Message" means the transmission of a single or group of data elements between a submitter and the department provided in a single transmission or as a series of transmissions that contains a logical grouping of data fields, in a defined sequence, with a message type and trigger event.

(10) "Messaging guide" means the *Washington State Messaging Guide for Syndromic Surveillance*, publication number DOH 420-096 Version 1.7 published by the department at www.doh.wa.gov. Copies may be obtained by contacting the department. To meet the requirement established by the legislature in RCW 43.70.057(3) that the rules adopted support alignment with emerging national standards and the minimization of administrative burden and costs, the department may make nonsubstantive

changes to the messaging guide, such as correcting broken links or updating the contact information, without changing the version number.

(11) "Patient care information" means information recorded by a health care facility during a health care encounter.

(12) "Rapid health information network" or "RHINO" means a program within the department that collects, maintains, analyzes, and disseminates data elements for use in tracking, monitoring, and evaluating health care encounters.

(13) "Research" means the same as in RCW 42.48.010.

(14) "State" means Washington state unless otherwise specified.

(15) "Submitter" means any hospital with an emergency department licensed under chapters 70.41 RCW and 246-320 WAC or health care facility that sends patient care information data to the department RHINO program, whether mandatory or nonmandatory.

NEW SECTION

WAC 246-460-020 Data elements. Submitters shall align the data elements as described in, and consistent with, the guidelines established in the messaging guide.

NEW SECTION

WAC 246-460-030 Submission of data elements and messages. (1) Submitters shall transmit data elements and messages in the format consistent with the messaging guide.

(2) Submitters shall transmit all required data elements for each health care encounter unless there is incomplete data on a patient visit in the electronic health record. In such cases, all available data must be reported. For data elements where information is missing, submitters shall transmit the data element without content.

(3) Submitters shall transmit to the department an automated report by electronic transmission of data elements and messages about a health care encounter within 24 hours of the initiation of the patient visit. Submitters shall submit messages as early as possible after midnight and the submission must contain all data elements and messages from the previous 24 hours.

(4) Submitters shall transmit messages for all health care encounters and shall not delete or remove any required data elements of a message. Updated messages must be sent during the patient's visit and after discharge as information becomes available to enable a complete record of each health care encounter. The information contained must be cumulative, including all previously sent information that remains correct, and any new or changed information. Updated messages must be sent within at least 24 hours of the information being collected.

(5) The department may require submitters to provide additional information only for the purposes of validating data elements received, verifying accuracy, and conducting surveillance of and addressing potential public health threats.

NEW SECTION

WAC 246-460-040 Establishing electronic submission. (1) To begin electronic submission to the rapid health information network, submitters shall:

(a) Register with the department; and

(b) Establish a secure electronic transmission through the system designated by the department on its website and in its messaging guide.

(2) If connectivity through the department's designated system is not possible, the submitter shall request an alternate solution from the department. Submitters shall inform the department of any planned changes in its electronic health record system vendor within 30 days of implementing a change that will impact electronic submission to avoid an interruption to, or degradation of, electronic submissions to the department.

NEW SECTION

WAC 246-460-050 Errors in data elements or messages. (1) Should the department identify errors in a message or data elements included in a message, the department will notify the submitter in writing or electronically.

(a) Submitters shall acknowledge the department's initial requests to resolve the issues within one business day.

(b) Submitters shall resend the information, or send replacement information, in the event of missing or erroneous data elements.

(c) If the department has not received any communication from a submitter within 10 business days, and the issue or issues have not been resolved, the submitter will be considered out of compliance.

(2) Submitters shall provide the department with current key staff contact information for use in the event of data or message quality errors. The department will maintain contact information for submitters in the messaging guide.

NEW SECTION

WAC 246-460-060 Release of data and data sharing agreements. (1) The secretary of health or their delegate may determine if an event presents a clear and imminent adverse threat to the health of the public, qualifying as an emergent public health threat, where the department may release data without a formal data sharing agreement.

(2) The department may designate any requested data element as either a direct patient identifier or an indirect patient identifier as defined by RCW 43.70.057, based on the uniqueness of a data element or assessed risk of reidentification through the combination of data elements in a data request.

(3) The department will provide submitters query access to their own submitted data through access to the system. Submitters shall sign a written agreement as required by RCW 43.70.057 (6) through (8). Sub-

mitters may request access at a future date if they declined while onboarding. The department will maintain contact information for access requests in the messaging guide. Submitters can retrieve any available data within 30 minutes of submitting a query, once the data has been ingested into the system.

NEW SECTION

WAC 246-460-070 Custom data product fees. (1) The department shall collect nonrefundable fees to cover the actual cost of retrieving data for individuals and organizations engaged in research or private use of the data at the rate of $156 per hour with a two and a half-hour minimum for custom data products.

(2) The department shall waive fees for the following organizations within the state:

(a) Local health jurisdictions; and

(b) Tribes, tribal organizations, and Indian health service designated tribal epidemiology centers serving tribes.