



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

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November 14, 2007

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members

FROM: Environmental Health Committee, State Board of Health—
Keith Higman and Karen VanDusen

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON 2007 *VIBRIO PARAHAEMOLYTICUS* CONTROL
PLAN—WAC 246-282-006**

Background and Summary

The Board heard in March 2007 from the Department of Health about the high number of illnesses caused by *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (Vp) in summer 2006 that were linked to eating raw or undercooked Washington oysters. Vp bacteria are endemic to the marine waters of the Pacific Northwest, where they are taken up by filter feeding shellfish. However, they tend to present a hazard to consumers only when the weather is warm and they have an opportunity to multiply in the shellfish.

In order to help reduce illnesses in 2007, the Board adopted a Vp Control Plan as an emergency rule at its May 9, 2007 meeting. The 2007 Vp Control Plan expanded on provisions of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program to require that oysters intended to be marketed for raw consumption are handled according to protocols that minimize bacteria multiplication. The emergency rule expired at the end of September 2007.

The Department is assessing the benefits provided by the emergency rule during the summer of 2007 with representatives of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, tribes, local health agencies, and the shellfish industry. Based on this assessment, the Department will develop a proposal for a permanent rule to help reduce future illnesses from Vp. Craig McLaughlin, Executive Director for the Board, signed a CR-101 in October to initiate this rule making process.

Maryanne Guichard, Director of the Department of Health's Office of Shellfish and Water Protection, is here today to give a preliminary assessment of the effect of the 2007 Vp Control Plan and describe planned activities for developing a proposal for a permanent Vp Control Plan rule. Please see materials behind Tab 10.

Recommended Board Action

None.