



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH**

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## **News Release**

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## **Board to Hold Public Hearing on HIV/AIDS Rules**

*Wednesday, April 13, 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Comfort Inn of Tumwater, 1620 74<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW, Tumwater*

At its meeting Wednesday, April 13 in Tumwater, the Washington State Board of Health will hold a public hearing on proposed changes to its HIV/AIDS rules. It will also discuss efforts to ensure all Washington children are tested at birth for hearing loss.

The revisions to the HIV/AIDS rules are intended to increase the proportion of HIV-infected persons who know their HIV status, and to ensure that more people who are exposed to HIV are informed of that exposure through partner notification. Social attitudes about HIV disease have changed significantly since the Legislature adopted the AIDS Omnibus Act in 1988 and the Board first adopted the associated rules. Highly prescriptive rules on pre- and post-test counseling, informed consent, and partner notification have been identified as barriers to testing.

The Board will take public testimony on the proposed rule in the afternoon beginning at 1:30 p.m. Copies of the proposed rule and related materials are available from the Board's Web site at <http://www.sboh.wa.gov>.

The Board will also hear a report from the Department of Health about efforts to voluntarily increase the number of children who are screened for hearing loss immediately after birth. An advisory committee recommended in 2003 that hearing loss should be added to the list of conditions that hospitals must screen for under the state's newborn screening law. The Board continues to monitor voluntary efforts to determine whether they could achieve the goal of screening all children born in the state.

In other business, the Board will consider draft bylaws and will hear a presentation about the Department of Ecology's Wastewater Treatment Program.

Copies of the agenda and related materials are available by contacting the Board of Health at 360-236-4110 or by visiting the Board's Web site at <http://www.sboh.wa.gov/>. The emergency and press contact number for the Board during the meeting is 360-701-2398.

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The State Board of Health serves the citizens of Washington by working to understand and prevent disease across the entire population. Established in 1889 by the State Constitution, the Board provides leadership by suggesting public health policies and actions, by regulating certain activities, and by providing a public forum. The Governor appoints ten members who fill three-year terms. Visit the Board's Web site at [www.sboh.wa.gov](http://www.sboh.wa.gov).