Acute Rheumatic Fever (ARF) and Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD)

Mandatory reporting requirements

What has changed?
From 19 June 2015 new laws will require mandatory reporting of all known cases of Acute Rheumatic Fever (ARF) and Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) to the Rheumatic Heart Disease Register of Western Australia.

Medical and nurse practitioners now have a legal duty to provide particular information on a patient when they become aware that the patient has, or is being treated for, ARF and/or RHD.

Why is the register required?
The measure will strengthen the healthcare approach to ARF and RHD, conditions that are wholly preventable. The data gathered on the register will help improve patient management and contribute to the understanding of these diseases and the burden they place on the health and welfare of people in Western Australia, and Australia as a whole.

Who will the new regulations affect?
The regulations will apply to:

- The Chief Executive Officer of a hospital or medical centre at which a patient with ARF and/or RHD presents
- A medical or nurse practitioner who diagnoses or is responsible for the treatment of a person with ARF and/or RHD
- An obstetrician responsible for the treatment of a pregnant woman who is, or becomes, aware of ARF or RHD in a patient.

If you fall into one of these categories, you have a legal obligation to give notice to the Chief Health Officer (CHO).

When do you need to give notice?
You must give notice when you become aware that a patient has, and is currently being treated for, ARF or RHD. This includes knowledge of previous diagnoses or treatments; even if made in another State or Territory.

health.wa.gov.au
How is notice given?
Notification is given to the WA RHD Register and Control Program, under delegated duties of the CHO. Notifications are submitted by fax 91935260 from health service providers outside DoH or by fax or email RHDRegister@health.wa.gov.au for health service providers within DoH.

Information, tests and reports need only be provided once. If you reasonably believe that the CHO already has the relevant information, test or report, you need not take action.

The laws are not retroactive. The requirements only apply to information about a diagnosis or treatment, diagnostic test or medical report prepared after 19 June 2015.

The CHO may, at any time, in writing, request further information about a person on the register. Compliance must be within 14 days of receiving the request.

What do you need to provide?

For Acute Rheumatic Fever (ARF):

- Name and contact details of person given notice
- Complete a CHO approved form [ARF notification form](#) detailing the diagnosis and treatment of the patient with ARF
- Provide a copy of each diagnostic test (including an echocardiogram) carried out on the patient during their diagnosis or treatment of ARF
- Provide a copy of each medical specialist’s report related to the patient’s diagnosis and treatment of ARF
- You must also ensure that the following personal information on the patient is provided:
  - their full name, address and contact details
  - if the patient is under 18 years of age, the full name, address and contact details of a parent or guardian
  - their sex and date of birth
  - if known, the patient’s ethnicity, including if they are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

For Rheumatic Heart Disease

Name and contact details of person giving the notice

Provide a copy of each diagnostic test (including an echocardiogram) carried out on the patient during their diagnosis or treatment of RHD

Provide a copy of each medical specialist’s report related to the patient’s diagnosis and treatment of RHD

- You must also ensure that the following personal information on the patient is provided:
  - full name, address and contact details;
  - if the patient is under 18 years of age, the full name and address of a parent or guardian;
  - their sex and date of birth
  - if known, the patient’s ethnicity, including if they are of Aboriginal or Torres Straits
You may be requested for further information.

**What is the timeframe for reporting ARF and RHD cases?**

There are different requirements for ARF/RHD:

**ARF**

- Complete a CHO approved form [ARF notification form](#)
- Provide a copy of each diagnostic test (including an echocardiogram)
- *Acute Phase* within 14 days of receiving test results – otherwise within 30 days of receiving test results
- Provide a copy of each medical specialist’s report
- *Acute Phase* within 14 days of the specialist finalising the report – otherwise within 30 days of the specialist finalising the report

You must also ensure that certain personal information on the patient is provided (see supplementary “Notice Requirements” sheet)

**RHD**

- Provide a copy of each diagnostic test (including an echocardiogram) – within 30 days of receiving test results
- Provide a copy of each medical specialist’s report – within 30 days of the specialist finalising the report

You must also ensure that certain personal information on the patient is provided (see supplementary “Notice Requirements” sheet)

**Limited disclosure:**

Health professionals need to inform patients that it is a statutory requirement to send information to the WA RHD Register. A patient may request in writing limited disclosure of identifying information available to health sites and health professionals.