



Syphilis WebPAS Clinical Alert Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure outlines the process for activating a clinical alert in the Web Patient Administration System (WebPAS) to assist in the management of clients for whom other attempts to treat and test for syphilis have been unsuccessful. The clinical alert is a critical means of sharing information with other WA Health clinicians who may have contact with the client at risk and is able to treat appropriately. Standardising the Syphilis clinical alert procedure across WA Country Health Service and in alignment with Perth metropolitan health service providers ensures clinicians can recognise alerts and thus manage infectious syphilis cases consistently and in a timely manner.

In all cases, regional public health units (PHUs) will attempt to manage and treat clients through standard public health follow up processes prior to recommending a WebPAS clinical alert.

2. Procedure

2.1 Criteria for alert activation

A clinical alert will be activated for people at high risk of adverse outcomes who have not been treated for syphilis despite public health efforts (untreated cases). It may include persons who could transmit syphilis to people at high risk of adverse outcomes (named contacts of infectious syphilis cases).

The following outlines the criteria for whom a clinical alert may be requested for approval:

- untreated cases
 - clients with an infectious syphilis diagnosis and not been treated **within 14 days** of diagnosis who are:
 - not pregnant OR
 - pregnant less than 23 weeks gestation
 - clients with an infectious syphilis diagnosis and not been treated **within 3 days** of diagnosis who are:
 - pregnant of 23 weeks or greater gestation
- named contacts of infectious syphilis cases
 - named contacts reported to be:
 - participating in sex work OR
 - pregnant AND
 - have not been treated **within 14 days** of being named as a contact
 - a male named by two or more females of reproductive age AND has not been treated **within 28 days** of being named as a contact.

2.2 Process for alert activation and deactivation

The below process is to be followed to **activate** the 'Syphilis WebPAS clinical alert':

1. Regional PHUs review the public health follow up of client and agree criteria is met.
2. [MR Alert 2 Clinical Alert Notification form](#) is completed by regional PHU including the following details:

- i. how client fits criteria
 - ii. previous attempts to follow up and treat.
 - iii. history of previous Syphilis WebPAS Clinical alerts
3. Regional Public Health Physician (PHP) endorses alert to be activated
4. Using email template ([Appendix A](#)), the Regional PHP emails the WACHS Director of Public Health Medicine (DPHM) a recommendation for a syphilis WebPAS clinical alert to be activated
5. The completed [MR Alert 2 Clinical Alert Notification form](#) is to be attached and the regional Public Health Unit cc'd into the email.
6. DPHM, or appropriate proxy in their absence, will approve or decline within 24 hours of receipt of email request:
7. If approved, the regional PHU emails the [MR Alert 2 Clinical Alert Notification form](#) to the WACHS Health Information System (HIS) to be uploaded as an alert
8. If declined, the DPHM will provide a justification and/or a request for more information
9. The WebPAS clinical alert is to be documented by a member of the regional PHU in the client's file on the REDCap syphilis management system (SMS) using the 'Public Health Management Form' tick box for alert
10. Syphilis WebPAS clinical alerts will be automatically uploaded to the Community Health Information System (CHIS) database
11. The WebPAS clinical alert to be included in the weekly Hot Topics report.



ATTENTION

DPHM approval is a requirement under the endorsement given by the WA Patient Alert Business Advisory Group for WebPAS clinical alerts to be used for syphilis follow up. The endorsement requires the sign off for the alerts to come from one doctor within WACHS, this has been delegated to the DPHM.

The below process is to be followed to **deactivate** the WebPAS clinical alert:

1. When a client with a syphilis WebPAS clinical alert has been treated, the WACHS clinician is required to email the relevant WACHS PHU advising them of treatment (see [Appendix B](#) for regional contact details).
2. Following notification, the regional PHU will submit a revised [MR Alert 2 Clinical Alert Notification form](#) to HIMs/HIS to deactivate the alert within 24 hours. The alert will be 'deactivated'
3. The CHIS database will automatically update and show a 'deactivated' alert. (It will not be 'removed')
4. A member of the regional PHU to:
 - i. update REDCap SMS and
 - ii. remove from weekly Hot Topics report.

2.3 Script for Clinical Alert

The clinical alert text to be inserted into the [MR Alert 2 Clinical Alert Notification form](#) is scripted below, noting the following:

- The script accounts for word/character counts for alerts.
- The script is to be used, with any variations underlined.
- The **Clinical Alert Code** (on the MR Alert 2 Clinical Alert Notification form) for both untreated cases and named contacts of infectious cases is **M, other medical conditions; Syphilis**.

Untreated cases	
'Condition' (as per Med Alert form)	Free Text (as per Med Alert form)
<p>Clients with an infectious syphilis diagnosis and not been treated within 14 days of diagnosis who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not pregnant OR pregnant less than 23 weeks gestation. 	<p>Untreated infectious syphilis: give benzathine benzylpenicillin 2.4 million units IM unless allergic. Order syphilis serology, +/- bHCG, +/- swab ulcers.</p> <p>Inform relevant PHU by email</p>
<p>Clients with an infectious syphilis diagnosis and not been treated within three working days of diagnosis who are pregnant of 23 weeks or greater gestation.</p>	<p>Untreated infectious syphilis: Admit for benzathine benzylpenicillin 2.4 million units IM. Order syphilis serology +/- swab ulcers.</p> <p>Inform relevant PHU by email</p>
Named contacts of infectious syphilis cases	
'Condition' (as per Med Alert form)	Free Text (as per Med Alert form)
<p>Named contacts of infectious syphilis cases and not been treated within 14 days of being named as a contact who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participating in sex work OR pregnant 	<p>Contact of syphilis: give benzathine benzylpenicillin 2.4 million units IM unless allergic. Order syphilis serology, +/- bHCG, +/- swab ulcers.</p> <p>Inform relevant PHU by email</p>
<p>A male named by two or more cases who are females of reproductive age and has not been treated within 28 days of being named as a contact.</p>	<p>Contact of syphilis: give benzathine benzylpenicillin 2.4 million units IM unless allergic. Order syphilis serology +/- swab ulcers.</p> <p>Inform relevant PHU by email</p>

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The **Director Population Health** (DPH) is responsible for:

- oversight and governance responsibilities for the compliance of this guideline and health service responses to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of consumers with infectious syphilis (including an unborn child).

The **Director of Public Health Medicine** (DPHM) is responsible for:

- responding to email requesting Syphilis WebPAS clinical alert from regional PHP, for a client at risk as per process for **activating** a WebPAS clinical alert (see point 2.2)
- allocating an appropriate proxy to act as DPHM in their absence.

The **Public Health Physician** (PHP) is responsible for:

- discussing with regional PHU staff and endorsing the activation of a syphilis WebPAS clinical alert
- emailing the WACHS DPHM (using email template) with the completed MR Med Alert 2 request form (cc regional generic Public Health email) requesting approval

- emailing the WACHS HIMs/HIS network when approval has been granted by DPHM for new Syphilis WebPAS clinical alert to be activated.

The **Public Health Unit** (PHU) is responsible for:

- discussing activation for a Syphilis WebPAS Clinical Alert with the regional PHP
- emailing the WACHS HIMs/HIS network to **deactivate** Syphilis WebPAS Clinical alert (as per point 2.2) after being notified that client has been treated
- updating RedCAP SMS and Hot Topics report when clinical alert has been activated or deactivated for client.

Health Information Systems (HIS) is responsible for:

- following the steps to create, modify, update, or deactivate syphilis Clinical Alerts in WebPAS.

Health Information Managers (HIMs) are responsible for:

- providing lists of Clinical Alerts for infectious syphilis due for review to relevant WACHS PHU on a quarterly basis. Regional HIMs will maintain oversight of the automated process for updating the list of Clinical alerts for infectious syphilis treatment within WebPAS in their region.

WACHS clinicians are responsible for:

- when sighting an existing WebPAS clinical alert for infectious syphilis, to take actions to ensure treatment of a client for infectious syphilis according to the State sexual health guidelines
- to inform regional Public Health Unit that the Syphilis WebPAS Clinical Alert has been acted on.

All staff are required to comply with the directions in WACHS policies and procedures as per their roles and responsibilities. Guidelines are the recommended course of action for WACHS and staff are expected to use this information to guide practice. If staff are unsure which policies procedures and guidelines apply to their role or scope of practice, and/or are unsure of the application of directions they should consult their manager in the first instance.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Regional PHU's will generate monthly reports of active alerts from the REDCap SMS for review by team and, if required, the regional HIM. The purpose of the review is to ensure:

- all treated clients' clinical alerts have been deactivated.
- processes for deactivating alerts have been followed.

If following the monthly review of the active alerts, a client is found to have been treated in another health setting (e.g. in primary care or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation), the regional PHU will submit a revised [MR Alert 2 Clinical Alert Notification form](#) to deactivate the alert.

WACHS Area Office Public Health team will use the weekly Hot Topics reports and RedCAP SMS Syphilis WebPAS Alert reports as monitoring tools to:

- ensure process for activating and deactivating WebPAS clinical alerts is being followed.
- have oversight of number of WebPAS clinical alerts across WACHS regions.

WACHS Area Office Public Health Team will conduct service level evaluation after twelve months of implementation.

5. References

Department of Health and Aged Care [Internet]. Australia, 2024. [National response to syphilis](https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/national-response-to-syphilis). Available from: https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/national-response-to-syphilis?utm_source=health.gov.au&utm_medium=callout-auto-custom&utm_campaign=digital_transformation

Department of Health [Internet]. Western Australia, 2020. [Silver book – STI/BBV management guidelines](https://www.health.wa.gov.au/Silver-book). Available from: <https://www.health.wa.gov.au/Silver-book>

Department of Health [Internet]. Western Australia, 2023. [WA Syphilis outbreak response](https://www.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/U_Z/WA-Syphilis-outbreak-response). Available from: https://www.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/U_Z/WA-Syphilis-outbreak-response

6. Definitions

Nil

7. Document Summary

Coverage	WACHS wide
Audience	All WACHS Public Health teams
Records Management	Corporate Recordkeeping Compliance Policy Health Record Management Policy
Related Legislation	Health Services Act 2016 (WA) Public Health Act 2016 (WA)
Related Mandatory Policies/Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MP 0053/17 Patient Alert Policy • Clinical Governance, Safety and Quality Policy Framework
Related WACHS Policy Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antenatal and Postnatal Syphilis Screening Guideline
Other Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHAC CDNA Series of National Guidelines (SoNGs) • DoH Silver book – STI/BBV management guidelines • KEMH Statewide Maternity Shared Care Guidelines • KEMH Obstetric and Gynaecology Guidelines • DoH Syphilis Outbreak Response • DoH Western Australian Syphilis Outbreak Response Action Plan 2023 - 2025 • WA Syphilis Point of Care Testing Guidelines • ASHM SYPHILIS Contact Tracing
Related Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MR Alert 2 Clinical Alert Notification form
Related Training	Nil
Aboriginal Health Impact Statement Declaration (ISD)	ISD Record ID: 3615
National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards	5.04, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 6.04, 6.09, 6.11
Aged Care Quality Standards	Nil
Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Clinical Care	Nil
Other Standards	National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards: Clinical governance Standard, Partnering with Consumers Standard and Clinical Safety Standard

8. Document Control

Version	Published date	Current from	Summary of changes
1.00	31 March 2025	31 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New procedure
1.01	21 July 2025	31 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor amendment Clarification of roles and responsibilities Correction of contact email for HIM network

9. Approval

Policy Owner	Executive Director Clinical Excellence
Co-approver	Executive Director Nursing and Midwifery
Contact	Director Population Health
Business Unit	WACHS Area Office Public Health
EDRMS #	ED-CO-24-475896
<p><i>Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.</i></p>	

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

Appendix A: Email template for initiating Syphilis WebPAS Clinical Alert

To: Director of Public Health Medicine

Cc: Regional Communicable disease control (i.e. Pilbara, Southwest for example)

Subject: IMPORTANT & CONFIDENTIAL request for Syphilis WebPAS clinical alert

Assign as: 'High importance' and request a read receipt (in 'options' heading on toolbar)

Attachment: Fully completed [MR Alert 2 Clinical Alert Notification form](#) (as per script in 2.3)

Dear (*Name of Director of Public Health Medicine*),

We are writing to inform you of a client in (*name of region*) that meets the criteria for a 'Syphilis WebPAS clinical alert'.

Clinical details and criteria are:

- How client fits criteria
- Previous attempts to follow up and treat
- History of previous Syphilis WebPAS Clinical Alerts

Please see the attached Med Alert form.. I, as the regional Public Health Physician, have endorsed the request for an alert to be activated in WebPAS for this client.

Please approve this Syphilis WebPAS Clinical Alert to be activated as per the regional process to HIMs/HIS.

Kind regards,

(Name of Regional PHP)

Public Health Physician

Appendix B: Contact details for PHUs and HIM

Regional population/public health units – WA Country Health Service

Goldfields PHU Based in Kalgoorlie:

- Email: WACHSGoldfieldsCommunicableDiseaseControl@health.wa.gov.au

Great Southern PHU Based in Albany:

- Email: gs.diseasecontrol@health.wa.gov.au

Kimberley PHU Based in Broome:

- Email: WACHSKimberleyCommunicableDiseaseControl@health.wa.gov.au

Midwest PHU Based in Geraldton:

- Email: WACHSMidwestCommunicableDiseaseControl@health.wa.gov.au

Pilbara PHU Based in South Hedland:

- Email: WACHSPilbaraCommunicableDiseaseControl@health.wa.gov.au

Southwest PHU Based in Bunbury:

- Email: WACHSSouthwestCommunicableDiseaseControl@health.wa.gov.au

Wheatbelt PHU Based in Northam:

- Email: WACHSWheatbeltCommunicableDiseaseControl@health.wa.gov.au

Regional Clinical Coding departments – WA Country Health Service

Generic WACHS HIM:

- WACHSHIMNetwork@health.wa.gov.au

Goldfields HIM (Tauree Meyers):

- GFPatientAlerts@health.wa.gov.au

Great Southern HIM (Sheridan Miller/Darren Kay):

- wachs-gs.patientalerts@health.wa.gov.au

Kimberley HIM (Jihan Harraway):

- KMPatientAlerts@health.wa.gov.au

Midwest HIM (Jacob Stanley):

ClinicalApplications.WACHS-Midwest@health.wa.gov.au

Pilbara HIM (Liz Pegler):

- WACHSPB_PatientSafetyQuality@health.wa.gov.au

Southwest HIM (Judy Murphy/Sonja Kammann while Millie Weston is on leave)

- WACHS-SWAlertNotification@health.wa.gov.au

Wheatbelt HIM (Alyce Smith (while Leanda Tunney is on leave)

- wachs-wbpatientalerts@health.wa.gov.au