September 1, 2019

Re: Future Records Request for the Maternal Mortality Review Panel

To Whom It May Concern:

As directed by RCW 70.54.450, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) coordinates the Maternal Mortality Review Panel to conduct “comprehensive, multidisciplinary reviews of maternal deaths in Washington to identify factors associated with those deaths and make recommendations for system changes to improve health care services for women in this state.” The panel reviews cases of women who died within a year of pregnancy or childbirth. A variety of records are collected for this work, including information about hospitalizations, vital statistics, medical records, and autopsy reports.

The law gives DOH the authority to obtain records and data from a variety of sources, including some state agencies, health care providers and facilities, local health departments, coroner and medical examiners offices, and other medical and professional facilities licensed by the state of Washington. Information, documents, and records obtained by DOH for the purposes of this review are protected by law and will remain confidential. They are not subject to public inspection, copying, or introduction into evidence in any civil or criminal court proceedings.

Please be advised, we may contact your facility to request medical records. If such a request is made, we ask that it be fulfilled as soon as possible. The next review period will begin in October 2019.

For questions or more information, please contact Alexis Bates, Maternal Mortality Review Coordinator at the Department of Health by e-mail at alexis.bates@doh.wa.gov or by phone at (360) 236-3510.

Information about the maternal mortality review panel can be found at our website www.doh.wa.gov/maternalmortality.

Sincerely,

Kathy Lofy, MD
State Health Officer