Washington State Department of HEALTH

Office of Communicable Disease Epidemiology
P.O. Box 47890 Olympia WA 98504
www.doh.wa.gov | TDD Relay: 711

September 22, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

Subject: Letter of Support for a Coordinated Multi-state investigation of a national *Cladophialophora bantiana* rate increase

I am writing regarding the observed national rate increase of the fungus *Cladophialophora bantiana* among clinical specimens identified using PCR performed by a large reference laboratory at University of Washington. This fungus overwhelmingly causes brain abscesses, has mortality rates of >50%, and typically causes disease in seemingly healthy individuals.

CDC and our partners at the University of Washington detected a dramatic increase (4-fold increase since 2023). The specimens were submitted from laboratories in 21 states and D.C., suggesting a national increase rather than a localized outbreak.

Given this concerning rise in national rates, Washington Department of Health would strongly support a centrally coordinated multi-jurisdictional investigation of *C. bantiana* cases in the United States from January 2020 to present. Washington Department of Health would also recommend CDC's Mycotic Diseases Branch to coordinate the multi-jurisdictional technical assistance. This investigation will provide key insights regarding epidemiological and clinical characteristics of this poorly characterized fungus to inform appropriate public health messages and interventions.

We are confident that this coordinated investigation will help to rapidly identify appropriate public health interventions to protect people's lives. We would like to volunteer our current first year EIS Officer, Becky Kann to be available for coordinating the epidemiologic investigation of the Washington State residents. The contacts for Washington State should be Hanna Oltean, Becky Kann and Scott Lindquist to help streamline the communication during this investigation.

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Scott

Scott Lindquist MD MPH
State Medical Epidemiologist