

MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL DHF STAFF
THROUGH: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HEALTH SERVICES
FROM: CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER
DATE: 30 JULY 2009 **TRIM REF NO:** DD2009/00714
RE: IMPLEMENTATION OF WHO GROWTH CHARTS

The Department of Health and Families has endorsed the decision to use World Health Organisation (WHO) Growth Charts (2006) in health services across the Northern Territory.

The use of the WHO Growth Standards (0-5 years) and WHO (2007) Growth References (5-19 years) is to take effect from August 2009 and supersedes the previously used combination of the NHCS (1979) and CDC (2000) Growth Reference charts used in the Northern Territory.

Extensive consultation has informed this decision and the background to this decision is presented in the discussion paper "Growth Charts in the Northern Territory" available via the Remote Health Atlas site:

http://www.remotehealthatlas.nt.gov.au/growth_chart_discussion_paper.pdf

Further information is also available at the WHO website:
<http://www.who.int/childgrowth/standards/en/>

Implementation considerations differ between those sites using hard copy medical records and those using electronic record systems:

Sites using Paper-based Medical Records

Implementation of this change will be staged as follows:

Children older than 6 months

Hospitals and health centres using paper based records should continue to use the NT Road to Health Chart (0-3 years) or Pharmacia & Upjohn (0-3 years, 2-18 years) Growth Charts (green and blue) if children have already been commenced on these charts. This avoids the need to re-plot existing data.

However, if a chart is not already in use, commence using the appropriate WHO charts. This will include when a child progresses beyond the existing age range of a current chart.

Newborns and infants less than 6 months

These children's growth should be plotted on the WHO growth charts: 0-2 years weight for age and length for age and the 0-5 years head circumference (percentile charts should be used).

The new charts are currently being professionally printed and will shortly be made available. They are also available via the Remote Health Atlas at:
http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Remote%5FHealth%5FAtlas/Forms/growth_charts/cont.

Sites using Electronic Medical Record Systems

Relevant electronic health record management systems in use in both DHF and Non Government health services are being upgraded to incorporate the WHO standards.

Hospitals and health centres using computer based growth monitoring are to simply continue using their current program – WHO charts will be applied in due course and existing data will be then be plotted against the new growth standards.

If you have any questions regarding this topic, please contact Maternal Youth and Child Health staff, nutritionists or hospital dieticians, or Community Paediatricians in your region.

Please direct any feed back or comments in relation to the WHO Growth Charts to clare.macvicar@nt.gov.au.



BARBARA PATERSON
CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER

5 August 2009