



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Health System

DATE: July 31, 2009
BOARD MEETING DATE: August 25, 2009
SPECIAL NOTICE/HEARING: None
VOTE REQUIRED: Majority

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jean S. Fraser, Chief, Health System
Brian J. Zamora, Director, Community Health Division

SUBJECT: Public Health Laboratory Fees

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution establishing Public Health Laboratory fees effective September 1, 2009.

BACKGROUND:

The Public Health Laboratory provides both clinical and environmental tests to the Health System, other County departments, private physicians, clinics, hospitals, and the general public. In addition to fees for tests, the Public Health Laboratory charges a fee for processing annual applications for Non-Diagnostic Health Assessment test programs to verify appropriate testing practices. Health and Safety Code §101325 authorizes the County to charge fees to pay the reasonable expenses of the Health Officer incurred in enforcing state laws, regulations and orders relating to public health. The Public Health Laboratory test menu is limited to tests related to core public health services of infectious diseases and environmental protection or are related to chronic diseases preventable by public health measures.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed laboratory fees reflect the increased cost of labor and supplies, including expensive, sophisticated reagents required by new technologies that provide faster, more accurate test results. The proposed fees were determined based on a combination of: an analysis of the cost of providing the range of Public Health Laboratory tests, a review of the competitive environment, and an assessment by the County Health Officer regarding the importance of the test to public health. The fees are generally comparable to those for Santa Clara, San Francisco and Contra Costa Counties.



In some cases tests for diseases such as tuberculosis or rabies are offered below or without cost due to their critical importance for the health of the community-at-large. These are legitimately the mission of Public Health and are part of the Net County Cost of the Division.

Because of new equipment and the availability of new methodologies and reagents, the testing menu has expanded to include 18 new tests. New clinical tests include new sensitive tests for Tuberculosis, Hepatitis, and Colitis (MTB Amplified TB Probe, TB Susceptibility Tests, Hepatitis B PCR and *C. difficile* toxin RT-PCR). New environmental tests include additional physical properties of water.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the Resolution as to form.

Approval of this Resolution contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Healthy Community by ensuring that vital public health services are provided at an appropriate fee to recover costs associated with the service provided. It is anticipated that the performance of proficiency tests will remain in the 90% range or above.

Performance Measure:

Measure	FY 2008-09 Actual	FY 2009-10 Projected
Percent of laboratory proficiency tests each Public Health Microbiologist passes each year.	92%*	90%

*The performance of proficiency tests is in the 90% range or above.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed Public Health Laboratory fees are expected to generate revenue of approximately \$1,012,000 for FY 2009-10. This revenue was included in the Community Health tentatively Adopted FY 2009-10 Budget. The FY 2009-10 Net County Cost for the Public Health Laboratory is \$925,950.