



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Public Health
Department No.: 041
For Agenda Of:
Placement: Set Hearing: 08-03-10
Estimated Tme: 10 minutes on 08-10-10
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Takashi Wada, MD, MPH Director and Health Officer, Public
Director(s) Health Department
Contact Info: Susan Klein-Rothschild, Assistant Deputy Director, Community
Health 681-5435
**SUBJECT: Resolution for Laboratory Fees for Bordetella Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
Testing**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions: That the Board of Supervisors:

Set a hearing for August 10, 2010 to consider recommendations regarding laboratory testing fees as follows:

- a) Adopt a resolution implementing a Public Health Laboratory fee of \$70.00 for each polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for *Bordetella pertussis* and any other diseases that are tested through the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing method, pursuant to the California Health and Safety Code §101150, et. seq.
- b) Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, approve the Notice of Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) for the fee resolution.

Summary Text:

On September 16, 2008, your Board approved new laboratory fees for tests performed in the Public Health Laboratory. Subsequent to the adoption of those fees, a new testing method, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) for *Bordetella Pertussis* (Whooping Cough), was validated in the Public Health Laboratory. No fee was established for this method of *Bordetella Pertussis* testing at the time the fees were adopted.

There has been a dramatic increase in *Bordetella Pertussis* in California since January 2010 and the potential exists for cases to reach a 50 year high in California. The California Department of Public Health is recommending laboratories perform the *Bordetella Pertussis* testing through the PCR method in addition to the existing culture method. Thus, there is potential for a significant increase in testing

requests to the laboratory for this newly validated method. The Public Health Department is requesting an approved fee to deflect the cost of these tests while meeting the public health needs of our community.

Background:

Bordetella Pertussis, commonly referred to as Whooping Cough, is a highly contagious bacterial, respiratory infection that spreads from person to person. It is a vaccine preventable disease and children begin getting vaccinations for this disease as early as two months old. Protection against this disease is provided after four doses. However, neither the vaccine nor the illness itself offer lifetime immunity. As a result of the lack of full immunization in the population and the lack of regular booster vaccinations there are generally two to five year cycles in which we see an increase in Pertussis cases.

Between January and June of 2010, there has been five times the number of cases of Pertussis in the state of California compared with the previous year. San Luis Obispo County is one of three counties in the state experiencing the highest rates of Pertussis in the first six months of the year. Between January and June of 2010, Santa Barbara County did not experience an increase in the number of Pertussis cases, yet we anticipate an increase in the upcoming summer months. To prepare for the potential epidemic in our community, and the potential for a significant increase in testing, we are requesting a fee be established for Bordetella Pertussis PCR tests which were validated and are now performed through the Public Health Laboratory.

The requested fee is being established in the same manner as other laboratory fees. The fee is based on the actual cost of performing the test with consideration of the reimbursement allowed under federal third party payers, such as Medicare, and what is charged by other private laboratories. Although the actual cost of the test is calculated at \$183.47, the Public Health Department is requesting to charge only \$70.00 in order to encourage the use of this testing for the protection of the community.

The Public Health Laboratory will likely be moving toward validating PCR laboratory testing for other organisms and diseases over time. As these tests are validated in our lab, the approved fees for PCR tests under the same laboratory code can be applied for reimbursements of the newly validated PCR tests. This provides a mechanism to keep up with scientific advances.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Fiscal Analysis:

Adopting the PCR laboratory fee for *Bordetella Pertussis* will allow the Public Health Department to be ready to accept samples and charge for completing the test. The fiscal increase will be the cost of reagents needed to conduct the tests, estimated at less than \$1,000 to start. At this point, the estimate for volume of testing is 120 tests for a period of 2 months. As a result, we estimate that the costs of the testing will be approximately \$22,000. The fee of \$70 will provide an offset of \$8,400 and realignment funding will be used to offset the rest of the cost to benefit the community.

Adopting the PCR fee will not increase facilities, staff, General Fund contribution or A87 Cost Plan.

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Positions:

FTEs:

Special Instructions:

1. Request the Clerk of the Board to publish notice of this hearing, per the attached Notice (Attachment A) in the Santa Barbara News-Press 5 and 10 days prior to the hearing, in accordance with Government Code 6062a.
2. Return one fully executed copy of the Resolution along with a copy of the minute order to the Public Health Department Contracts Unit, 300 N. San Antonio Road, Building 8, Santa Barbara CA 93110
Attention: Rose Davis

Attachments:

Attachment A, Public Notice

Attachment B, Resolution Revising Fees

Attachment C, CEQA Exemption

Authored by:

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