

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version SB166
Fiscal Note Number _____
() Publish Date _____

Identifier (file name)	SB166-DHSS-PHL-04-02-12	Dept. Affected	Health and Social Services
Title	Laboratory Science Professional	Appropriation	Public Health
		Allocation	Public Health Laboratories
Sponsor	Senator Davis		
Requester	Senate Labor and Commerce Committee	OMB Component Number	2252

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	FY13 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY13 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY13	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants, Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

FUND SOURCE		(Thousands of Dollars)					
1002	Federal Receipts						
1003	GF Match						
1004	GF						
1005	GF/Prgm (DGF)						
1037	GF/MH (UGF)						
1178	temp code (UGF)						
TOTAL		***	***	***	***	***	***

POSITIONS							
Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

CHANGE IN REVENUES							

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY12) operating costs _____ (separate supplemental appropriation required,
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY13) costs _____ (separate capital appropriation required,
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)

Initial version.

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Division	Public Health	Date/Time 4/12 1:00 PM
Approved by	Nancy Rolfzen, Assistant Commissioner	Date 4/2/2012
	DHSS Finance & Management Services	

Analysis

This is an indeterminate fiscal note.

This bill establishes the requirements for licensure of medical laboratory science professionals. It establishes minimum criteria for medical laboratory testing personnel, as well as a requirement for continued competency. It would have significant program effects for the Department of Health and Social Services in the Alaska Public Health Laboratories. Licensing in any of the job classifications includes certification by a nationally recognized credentialing agency or organization.

Under this bill a person may not perform medical lab tests or use a job title listed in this chapter without a license. A "medical laboratory director" is defined as a licensed physician responsible for the operation of a medical laboratory and who is certified in clinical pathology by a nationally recognized credentialing agency approved by the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. "Medical laboratory testing" encompasses pre-analytic, analytic, and post-analytic phases of microbiological, serological, chemical, biological, hematological, immunological, immunohematological, genetic, radiobiassay, cytological, or any other procedure performed on material derived from the human body for the diagnosis, prevention, or monitoring of a disease, impairment, or clinical condition.

Under this bill, licenses would be valid for three years. The effective date of the bill is October 1, 2012. License requirements would be applicable immediately to a person who has not been employed in the state before the effective date. The license requirement does not apply until two years after the effective date to a person who has been employed at least half-time within at least three of the five years immediately preceding. Licensing does not apply until the latter of when the department begins issuing licenses or one year. Applicants will not be licensed under the transition clause after the first year.

The Public Health Labs help prevent and control epidemics and the spread of infectious disease by providing tests for underserved populations and assisting with epidemiological investigations of disease outbreaks. The Public Health Labs provide training, consultation, and reference testing for clinical laboratories throughout the state. Lab technicians provide timely detection and diagnosis of biological or chemical agents of terror. The scope of work performed by more than 30 state-employed public health microbiologists, chemists, laboratory technicians, and the Chief of the Public Health Laboratories at the Public Health Laboratories meets the definition of "medical laboratory testing" and "medical laboratory director." However, the highly specialized scientists who work in public health and specialty laboratories will be unable to qualify for licensure under this bill. These scientists do not have a credentialing agency available to them. Unlike hospital and "routine" clinical laboratories with credentialing agencies, the highly specialized scientists who work in public health and specialty laboratories often do not have credentialing because of the esoteric, rarity, or newness of the type of human testing being done. For example, clinical toxicology utilizes highly trained chemists performing analysis using equipment that is not usually available in hospital laboratories.

The cost of licensing medical laboratory workers is indeterminate. Some current employees will have a credentialing agency available to them and will obtain licenses; however, many current employees will undoubtedly be unable to qualify for a license and will have to find new careers. Increased vacancies will impact productivity. Job classes will have to be reclassified, possibly to a higher salary range. Without a mechanism to allow licensure for state public health laboratory scientists, the potential closure of the State Public Health Laboratories in Anchorage and Fairbanks is possible. If that happened, the availability of specialized human medical testing within the state would be reduced or eliminated. For example, the state would have to send toxic alcohol and other highly specialized testing to an out-of-state laboratory, resulting in a minimum of a 24-hour delay. The fiscal impact of closing the state public health laboratories and outsourcing laboratory testing is indeterminate.