

SENATE BILL NO. 269

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduced: 4/26/91
Referred: HES, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to testing for chlamydia and gonorrhea."

2 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 * **Section 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.** (a) The legislature finds that

4 (1) chlamydia is an important disease to detect and control because it can cause pelvic
5 inflammatory disease, which may result in infertility, difficult pregnancies, preterm labor, and neonatal
6 disease;

7 (2) the Department of Health and Social Services is currently not providing testing for
8 chlamydia even though its rate of occurrence in Alaska is one of the highest in the northwest;

9 (3) the test currently used by the Department of Health and Social Services to detect
10 gonorrhea, the Thayer-Martin bacterial culture test, is unreliable in Alaska because it is adversely
11 affected by environmental conditions and long transportation times;

12 (4) there is a testing procedure available, the DNA hybridization test, that could be used
13 to more effectively test for gonorrhea and that has the added benefit of being an effective test for
14 chlamydia as well;

1 (5) effective testing for gonorrhea and chlamydia with the DNA test, while initially more
2 expensive than current practice, would be more cost-effective in the long run because the incidence of
3 undiagnosed cases of both diseases would decline, decreasing the more expensive complications that can
4 occur when the diseases develop unchecked.

5 (b) Therefore, it is the purpose of this Act to require the Department of Health and Social
6 Services to use the more effective and comprehensive DNA hybridization test and prohibit further use
7 of the unreliable and less comprehensive Thayer-Martin bacterial culture test.

8 * Sec. 2. AS 18.15 is amended by adding a new section to read:

9 ARTICLE 3A. CHLAMYDIA AND GONORRHEA.

10 Sec. 18.15.250. TESTING PROCEDURES. (a) The department shall make available
11 on a statewide basis DNA hybridization testing to detect gonorrhea and chlamydia.

12 (b) The department may not use Thayer-Martin bacterial cultures, or any other culture
13 method, to diagnose gonorrhea.