



2020 Supplemental Budget Decision Package

Agency: 303 - Department of Health
Decision Package Code-Title: BB - Reinforce Outbreak Resp-Lab Courier
Budget Session: 2020 Supp
Budget Level: Policy Level
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Agency Recommendation Summary

The decentralized process through which the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) Public Health Laboratory receives test samples from hospitals, clinics, local health departments, first responders and other agency programs does not consistently ensure timely and proper test sample delivery. This can jeopardize the state's public health response system and result in delayed or missed disease detection. DOH requests funding to establish a courier system for specimen delivery, which will allow quicker, more accurate lab results to disease investigators and medical providers.

Fiscal Summary

Dollars in Thousands

Operating Expenditures	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Fund 001 - 1	\$0	\$400	\$400	\$400
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$400	\$400	\$400
Biennial Totals		\$400		\$800
Staffing	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
FTEs	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Average Annual		0.1		0.1
Object of Expenditure	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Obj. A	\$0	\$3	\$3	\$3
Obj. B	\$0	\$1	\$1	\$1
Obj. E	\$0	\$396	\$396	\$396

Package Description

Background:

The Public Health Lab (PHL) receives specimens from hundreds of submitters including hospitals, clinics, local health departments, first responders and even other offices or programs within its own agency. These samples are submitted for many different reasons, for example:

- Shellfish samples from up and down the Washington coast are submitted daily to ensure that clams, oysters, mussels, and geoduck are free from bacteria, viruses, and marine biotoxins;
- High consequence human specimens are submitted to diagnose diseases such as measles, mumps, and even emerging threats like Zika and Ebola; and
- Newborn screening samples are submitted each day and are tested to prevent death and permanent disability through early diagnosis and treatment of affected babies.

Problem Statement:

Cumulatively, the PHL will perform more than five million tests each year, thus the examples above represent a small fraction of the more than 129 important tests offered at the PHL. However, these examples have at least one thing in common, which highlight the public health risks posed by the existing sample delivery process; these types of samples must all be transported to the laboratory and need to arrive within a certain time-frame and/or at defined temperature parameters. Currently, the existing, decentralized process used to transport test samples to the PHL is unable to consistently ensure timely and proper delivery. This deficiency can jeopardize our public health response system and result in delayed or missed disease detection.

Specimen Delivery

Every day, public health lab staff, state epidemiologists, local health departments and other staff within DOH program offices spend countless hours coordinating specimen delivery to the PHL. Many sample types require cold temperature holding or must arrive at the lab within a day to ensure the validity of the test result. In many cases, the results of the testing are important enough to justify immediate testing. In such cases, specimens are often driven directly from the collection facility to the PHL by state or local public health staff. Many submitters for routine submission are required to pay for shipping specimens. As a result, they choose to collect samples all week (or in some cases longer) and submit large batches of samples. This approach slows down the public health actions that are taken in response to these. In addition, many tests each year are rejected because the samples are not received in a timely fashion, are not received at the correct temperature, or in some cases are lost in transit. At best, this results in costly sample recollection. At worst, the samples are irreplaceable and the inability to recollect and test results in adverse patient impacts through delayed or missed treatment. Delays in specimen transit could result in death or permanent disability for a baby with a severe newborn screening condition.

Proposed Solution:

To resolve these problems, the PHL needs a statewide specimen courier system. The funds requested will allow the PHL to arrange for routine daily pick up from all submitters throughout the entire state. The solution will be scalable to provide daily pick-ups for high volume submitters and on-call pick-ups for infrequent submitters. The system will also include urgent pick-up and delivery service for use in a public health emergency. This system will include routing and replenishing of specimen collection boxes to submitters, thus alleviating the logistical

burden and cost to the PHL to currently meet this demand. Another benefit to the courier system will be earlier daily specimen delivery to the PHL (by 8:00 AM) resulting in earlier testing, earlier results, and improving timeliness of public health action. Currently, most specimens are delivered to the PHL at around 10:30 AM. As a result, most samples don't make it to the actual testing lab until noon with subsequent testing much later in the business day (often into the evening).

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion or alteration of a current program or service:

Currently, Washington State does not offer a courier service for specimen delivery.

Detailed assumptions and calculations:

DOH will contract with a third-party courier service, which will be selected after a competitive bid process. This will ensure that the service provides the best value possible for DOH. The estimated cost included in this proposal was generated by discussing similar services available in other states and on past research performed by the PHL Newborn Screening Laboratory. The new courier service will reduce the PHL's need to use disparate delivery services such as FedEx, UPS or USPS for specimen delivery. While secondary, this proposal may also ease the administrative burden on the PHL by reducing shipping preparation work. This work includes filling out shipping requisitions and coordinating shipments on behalf of submitters.

The estimated costs for the courier services is \$400,000 per year starting in fiscal year 2021 and ongoing.

Workforce Assumptions:

See attached Financial Calculator (FNCAL)

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic framework:

This proposal relates to the Governor's Results Washington by aligning with the Efficient, Effective and Accountable Government Outcomes:

World Class Education

- Increasing the Economic Security of Washingtonians
 - Healthcare: The PHL performs testing of all Newborn's to detect treatable conditions. When these conditions are detected, the PHL connects the families with appropriate care and the diet necessary to prevent long term disabilities or death. The PHL also performs diagnostic testing for people who are under or un-insured.

Prosperous Economy

- Keeping the Puget Sound Ecosystem healthy (Environmental Laboratory Services); and
- Supporting an effective K-12 system (Environmental Laboratory Services)

Healthy and Safe Communities

- Ensuring access to Quality Healthcare

Efficient, Effective and Accountable Government

- Customer experience

This proposal also relates to the agency's strategic plan in the following ways:

- Public Safety: Improving the operational readiness of public health response and working to reduce the impacts on water quality;
- Healthiest Next Generation: Ensure all children have appropriate developmental screenings; and
- Healthy Living: Collect, analyze, use and publicly share data to appropriately address population issues.

Performance outcomes:

Once the courier service is in place, there will be several outcomes and benefits that will be tracked:

- Increased proportion of specimens arriving to PHL within one day;
- Reduced proportion of batch specimen submissions;
- Reduced use of FedEx and UPS delivery for specimens and packing;
- Increased proportion of specimens arriving two to three hours earlier per day;
- Increased proportion of test results delivered same day;
- Reduced number of samples rejected due to improper shipping; and
- Improved schedule testing runs since all specimens will be delivered together at the same time each day.

Other Collateral Connections

Intergovernmental:

The department expects support from all local health jurisdictions, medical providers, and tribes, since specimen submission to the PHL is a consistent challenge for many of them, especially some of the smaller jurisdictions.

Stakeholder response:

DOH expects support from all clinics and private laboratories that submit samples. For many notifiable conditions, these labs are required to submit per the Washington Administrative Code. Providing a free service to support those required submissions will be well received.

Legal or administrative mandates:

This request is not driven by legal or administrative mandates.

Changes from current law:

This request does not require any changes to statutes or rules.

State workforce impacts:

This request does not impact existing collective bargaining agreements.

State facilities impacts:

This request enhances the functioning of the state's sole public health laboratory.

Puget Sound recovery:

This request is not related to Puget Sound recovery efforts.

Reference Documents

- PL BB Reinforce Outbreak Resp-Lab Courier-FNCAL.xlsm

IT Addendum

Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?

No