



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

NORA VARGAS
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: October 22, 2024

08

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

**AUTHORIZE ACCEPTANCE OF COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING /
CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING: FACILITIES AND/OR EQUIPMENT
GRANT FUNDING (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

The County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), Public Health Services, Public Health Laboratory (PHL) plays a critical role in protecting the health of San Diego County residents and visitors. Public health laboratories were established in response to outbreaks of diseases like typhoid, smallpox, and diphtheria, which are now considered diseases of the past. The California network is comprised of various laboratories, which play an important role in disease diagnosis and epidemiological surveillance of routine public health reportable diseases. Each individual laboratory further serves as a source of surge capacity for other local laboratories and the State laboratory in emergency situations and outbreaks.

Previously, the County public health laboratory was housed at the Health Services Complex building, and in February 2022, an inspection of the building determined that significant structural work was required, and it was decided that the building was no longer suitable for use. Due to this, an immediate plan for a new laboratory was initiated, and on October 25, 2022 (11), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) approved the design and pre-construction services for a new public health laboratory. The new public health laboratory is designed to be approximately 52,000 square feet to accommodate and meet operational needs. The space allocation at the new facility will almost double the previous laboratory workspace to allow expansion of testing capabilities and methods, which include but are not limited to, whole genome sequencing, molecular surge, Tuberculosis testing services, and a robust Biosafety Level 3 program. The County public health laboratory serves as the approved Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Select Agent Laboratory for San Diego and Imperial Counties and as the location of the federal BioWatch program for the detection of bioterrorism agents in San Diego County.

On April 8, 2024, the County PHL received an eligibility notification from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Community Project Funding / Congressionally Directed Spending: Facilities and/or Equipment (CPF/CDS) grant to submit an application for one-time funding for \$2,500,000, for the term September 30, 2024 to September 29, 2027. On June 12, 2024, County PHL applied for the

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CPF/CDS grant, and on August 2024, County PHL received the notice of award. If approved to accept funding, this grant will fund items that include, but are not limited to, laboratory equipment, preventative maintenance service plans, and other items that are intended to improve workflow and surge capacity to prepare the new public health laboratory with streamlining operations. Additionally, the new public health laboratory will support local, State, and regional efforts to identify, track, and response to COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 and other emerging infectious diseases.

Today's actions request the Board to authorize acceptance of \$2,500,000 in CPF/CDS grant funding from HRSA, and authorize the Agency Director, HHSA, or designee, to apply for additional funding opportunities, if available.

Today's actions support the County vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically those communities and populations in San Diego County that have been historically left behind as well as our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities. This will be accomplished by ensuring the local health department can continue to improve the health and well-being of residents in San Diego County through enhanced and increased testing, prevention, and intervention to prevent transmission of disease.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Authorize the acceptance of \$2,500,000 in grant funds from the Health Resources and Services Administration's Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending grant allocation for the period of September 30, 2024 through September 29, 2027, for Public Health Laboratory to procure additional laboratory equipment and maintenance service plans, and authorize the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Health and Human Services Agency, or designee, to execute all required grant documents, including any annual extensions, amendments, and/or revisions thereto that do not materially impact or alter the services or funding level.
2. Authorize the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Health and Human Services Agency, or designee, to apply for additional funding opportunity announcements, to support the Public Health Laboratory.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Public Health Services, Public Health Laboratory (PHL) continues to monitor changes to laboratory and testing procedures, and technology and testing analysis advancements in order to provide efficient and effective services to communities in San Diego County. San Diego County has one of the busiest border crossings in the United States and is home to a diverse population, who include but are not limited to, military and tribal communities. Reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show disparities among populations impacted by diseases that include, but are not limited to, HIV, viral Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Infection, Tuberculosis, and COVID-19. According to data from the State of California's Vital Records Business Intelligence System, COVID-19 was the leading cause of death among Hispanic San Diego County residents in 2021,

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and the fourth leading cause of death among this population in 2022. These health disparities have shown to be linked to behavioral risk factors, environmental exposures, social determinants of health, and access to accurate and timely testing. To protect the health and well-being of all residents in San Diego County, the County PHL performs diagnostic testing to ensure diseases are detected among the general public. Additionally, testing results and patient demographics are available through the laboratory information management system and allow County PHL to track and monitor health disparities and inequities across a variety of diseases.

A fully functioning public health laboratory that provides the core activities of surveillance and laboratory assessment is essential to ensure the best health outcomes for our communities. County PHL provides testing services to interrupt transmission of disease and protect all San Diego County residents, especially the most vulnerable. Additional funding will support County PHL with acquiring additional equipment and supplies to increase testing capabilities and response times to provide critical information to all San Diego County residents.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed actions support the County of San Diego (County) Sustainability Goal #4 to protect the health and well-being of everyone in the region by accepting additional funding to support the County Public Health Services, Public Health Laboratory (PHL) to purchase additional specialized instrumentation and maintenance. The addition of such instrumentation will also enable the PHL to increase capacity and testing services that are aimed to detect and prevent illnesses. This also supports County Sustainability Goal #3 to transition to a green, carbon-free economy as testing and identification will improve the overall health of communities, reduce the demand of associated care services, while increasing effectiveness of care providers and lowering operating costs of facilities, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions and waste generated within the care sector. This will improve the overall health of communities and reduce the demand of associated care services.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-26 Operational Plan in the Health and Human Services Agency. If approved, this request will result in estimated costs and revenue of \$1,200,000 in FY 2024-25 and estimated costs and revenue of \$1,300,000 in FY 2025-26. Funds for this program will use existing appropriations and be incorporated into future Operational Plans as needed. The funding source is the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Community Project Funding / Congressionally Directed Spending: Facilities and/or Equipment grant. There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

The Health Services Advisory Board reviewed this item on September 3, 2024, and recommended approval of the recommendations.

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BACKGROUND

The County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), Public Health Services, Public Health Laboratory (PHL) plays a critical role in protecting the health of San Diego County residents and visitors. Public health laboratories were established in response to outbreaks of diseases like typhoid, smallpox, and diphtheria, which are now considered diseases of the past. The California network is comprised of various laboratories, which play an important role in disease diagnosis and epidemiological surveillance of routine public health reportable diseases. Each individual laboratory further serves as a source of surge capacity for other local laboratories and the State laboratory in emergency situations and outbreaks.

Previously, the County public health laboratory was housed at the Health Services Complex building, and in February 2022, an inspection of the building determined that significant structural work was required, and it was decided that the building was no longer suitable for use. Due to this, an immediate plan for a new laboratory was initiated, and on October 25, 2022 (11), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) approved the design and pre-construction services for a new public health laboratory. The new public health laboratory is designed to be approximately 52,000 square feet to accommodate and meet laboratory needs. The space allocation at the new laboratory will almost double the previous laboratory workspace to allow expansion of testing capabilities and methods, which include, but are not limited to, whole genome sequencing, molecular surge, Tuberculosis testing services, and a robust Biosafety Level 3 program. The County public health laboratory serves as the approved Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Select Agent Laboratory for San Diego and Imperial Counties and as the location of the federal BioWatch program for the detection of bioterrorism agents in San Diego County.

On April 8, 2024, the County PHL received an eligibility notification from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to submit a grant application for one-time funding from the Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending: Facilities and/or Equipment (CPF/CDS) grant for \$2,500,000, for the term September 30, 2024 to September 29, 2027. On June 12, 2024, PHL applied for the CPF/CDS grant, and on August 2024, County PHL received the notice of award. If approved to accept funding, this grant will fund items that include, but are not limited to, laboratory equipment, preventative maintenance service plans, and other items that are intended to improve workflow and surge capacity to prepare the new public health laboratory with streamlining operations. A fully functioning PHL provides the core activities of surveillance, assessment, and assurance for San Diego County. Additionally, the new PHL will support local, State, and regional efforts to identify, track, and response to COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 and other emerging infectious diseases.

Today's actions request the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) to authorize acceptance of \$2,500,000 in CPF/CDS grant funding from HRSA, and to authorize the Agency Director, HHS, or designee, to apply for additional funding opportunities, if available.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action supports the Equity (Health) and Community (Quality of Life) initiatives in the County of San Diego 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, as well as our commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities.

Respectfully submitted,



FOR

EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A