
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1139

Brief Description: Concerning public notification of local health conditions.

Sponsors: Representatives Roberts, Walsh, Green, Moscoso, Jenkins, Lias, Fitzgibbon, Morrell, Ryu, Riccelli and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires local health jurisdictions to adopt community health alert notification plans to establish methods for informing residents of variations in the incidence of a notifiable condition in excess of the expected rate.

Hearing Date: 2/1/13

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

Notifiable conditions are diseases and conditions that the State Board of Health has determined are of such importance to protecting the public health that they must be reported to either a local health officer or the Department of Health (Department). Health care providers, laboratory directors, and health care facilities all have a duty to report occurrences of these diseases and conditions according to timelines and means established by the Department.

The Department collects the data and disseminates them routinely in monthly and annual reports. The Department may conduct investigations or institute control measures in response to reports of notifiable conditions, or assist local health jurisdictions with such activities.

Local health jurisdictions are required to review reports of notifiable conditions and determine appropriate actions to respond to: (1) each reported or suspected case; (2) any disease or condition considered a threat to public health; and (3) each reported or suspected outbreak of disease.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The Department must establish guidelines for local health jurisdictions to use while developing community health alert notification plans. The guidance must address components of the community health alert notification plans including (1) the methods for monitoring the incidence of notifiable conditions and when the incidence exceeds the rate that would normally be expected in the local health jurisdiction and (2) the manner and content for informing the public within the local health jurisdiction. In establishing guidelines for informing the public, the Department's guidelines must provide guidance on determining the appropriate level of response that considers the risk to the public from the notifiable condition, the duration of the higher incidence, the extent of the increased incidence, and the need to inform the public without creating undue concern or diminished receptivity to severe public health risks.

Local boards of health must adopt community health alert notification plans to establish the methods to be used to keep the public in its local health jurisdiction informed of the incidence of notifiable conditions in excess of the rate that would usually be expected. The plan must be adopted by July 1, 2014, and give consideration to the Department's guidance.

"Notifiable conditions" are defined as a disease or condition that the State Board of Health has determined to be of public health importance and must be reported to either the local health officer or the Department.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.