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SB-1296 Viral surveillance program. (2021-2022)

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ENROLLED AUGUST 25, 2022

PASSED IN SENATE MAY 24, 2022

PASSED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 22, 2022

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 06, 2022

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 14, 2022

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2021–2022 REGULAR SESSION

SENATE BILL

NO. 1296

Introduced by Senator Pan

February 18, 2022

An act to add Section 120131 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to public health.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1296, Pan. Viral surveillance program.

Existing law establishes the State Department of Public Health to implement various programs throughout the state relating to public health, including licensing and regulating health facilities and control of infectious diseases. Existing law requires the department to examine the causes of communicable disease in humans and domestic animals occurring, or likely to occur, in the state, and to establish a list of reportable diseases and the mechanism and timeline requirements for that reporting.

Existing law requires local health departments to have available the services of a public health laboratory for the examination of specimens from suspected cases of infectious and environmental diseases. Existing law requires the laboratory to provide the analyses required to assist in community disease surveillance.

This bill, no later than January 1, 2024, would require the department to complete an evaluation of the effectiveness of the state's viral surveillance capacity, including a comprehensive list of all public health laboratories and private clinical laboratories that conduct viral surveillance and genomic sequencing, as specified, and recommendations on how to optimize the state's viral surveillance capabilities. The bill, no later than January 1, 2025, would require the department to establish the "Viral Surveillance Hub" (VSH) that would be responsible for timely communication with any laboratory that conducts viral surveillance and identifies a potential novel virus or variant. The bill, beginning January 1, 2025, would require a laboratory conducting viral surveillance to report within appropriate timeframes established by the department to VSH the identification of a potential novel virus or variant

strongly suspected to be a pathogen as well as to submit within appropriate timeframes established by the department samples of each potential novel virus or variant strongly suspected to be a pathogen to VSH, as specified. The bill would require VSH to conduct next-generation sequencing of any samples, as specified, submitted by a viral surveillance facility and would allow VSH to contract with an outside entity to conduct this sequencing. The bill would require the department to have the results from viral sequences published on an internet website designed to hold sequence data, such as GISAID, with a hyperlink to the results on the department's internet website. The bill would require VSH to notify local health departments and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention upon a confirmed detection of a new virus or variant in the population.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 120131 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

120131. (a) The following definitions shall apply for purposes of this section:

(1) "Viral surveillance" means the monitoring of temporal or geographic circulation patterns of contagious viruses, including, but not limited to, those detailed in the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System.

(2) "Genomic sequencing" means any laboratory procedure that determines the order of all or most of the nucleotides in the genome of a disease-causing microbe, as per the CDC's description.

(3) "Next-generation sequencing" refers to sequencing technologies that can process a large quantity of genetic material at a time, as per the CDC's description.

(4) "Clinical laboratory" is a clinical laboratory as set forth in paragraph (8) of subdivision (a) of Section 1206 of the Business and Professions Code.

(5) "Public health laboratory" is a public health laboratory as described in Section 101150.

(b) The department, no later than January 1, 2024, shall complete an evaluation of the effectiveness of the state's viral surveillance capacity, which shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

(1) A comprehensive list of all public health laboratories and private clinical laboratories in California that conduct viral surveillance and genomic sequencing, or both, of patient laboratory samples.

(2) A comprehensive list of all research laboratories in California that conducted COVID-19 diagnostic testing pursuant to the waivers and allowances granted under federal and state law.

(3) The manner in which public health laboratories and private clinical laboratories that conduct viral surveillance communicate with other local and state public health and viral surveillance entities, including the frequency of communications.

(4) The type of information that is shared between entities and the manner by which information is shared.

(5) Recommendations on how to optimize the state's viral surveillance capabilities.

(6) An evaluation of the funding and other resources needed to establish the "Viral Surveillance Hub" (VSH), including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(A) Funding needed to support staffing and activities related to the VSH.

(B) Logistics of specimen transport.

(C) Development of a comprehensive organism database for participating laboratories to access.

(D) Information technology infrastructure needed.

(7) An evaluation of the funding and resources to support public health laboratories.

(c) The department shall, no later than January 1, 2025, establish the VSH responsible for timely communication with any laboratory that conducts viral surveillance that identifies a potential novel virus or variant. In establishing VSH, the department shall take into consideration the recommendations of the assessment required under subdivision (b). VSH shall allow for the electronic transmittal of information by any laboratory that conducts viral surveillance.

(d) Each laboratory, beginning January 1, 2025, that conducts viral surveillance that identifies a potential novel virus or variant strongly suspected to be a pathogen shall report this to VSH within the appropriate timeframes established by the department that are sufficient to facilitate timely identification of potentially new viruses or variants. Each laboratory that conducts viral surveillance shall submit samples of each potential novel virus or variant strongly suspected to be a pathogen to VSH for further analysis and next-generation sequencing within the appropriate timeframes established by the department that are sufficient to facilitate timely identification of potentially new viruses or variants.

(e) VSH shall conduct next-generation sequencing of any samples of potentially new viruses or variants submitted to them by a viral surveillance facility. VSH may contract with an outside entity to conduct next-generation sequencing and analysis of submitted samples. The department shall have the resulting viral sequences published on an internet website designed to hold sequence data, such as GISAID, with a hyperlink on its internet website to the published viral sequences. No private patient information shall be published.

(f) VSH shall notify local health departments and the CDC upon confirmation that a new virus or variant has been detected in the population.