

By: Lucio, et al.  
(Guerra)

S.B. No. 1121

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to public health laboratory capabilities in certain counties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 12, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Subchapter K to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER K. PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY CAPABILITIES IN CERTAIN COUNTIES

Sec. 12.151. PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY REPORT. (a) Not later than September 1, 2020, the department shall prepare and submit a written or electronic report to the legislature on public laboratories in this state's counties that are adjacent to an international border. The report must include:

(1) information on the existing testing capabilities of the public laboratories, focusing on clinical, environmental, and zoonotic testing capabilities; and

(2) recommendations to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity of the public laboratories through administrative action and legislation.

(b) The department shall collaborate with local health departments established under Subchapter D, Chapter 121, and public and private testing laboratories to collect information and develop recommendations for the report described by Subsection (a).

(c) This section expires September 1, 2021.

1       Sec. 12.152. LOCAL AGREEMENTS. Using available resources  
2 and as determined appropriate by the department, the department  
3 shall enter into agreements with institutions of higher education  
4 as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code, and public and  
5 private testing laboratories in this state to increase the  
6 availability of public health laboratory services for local health  
7 departments established under Subchapter D, Chapter 121, in  
8 counties adjacent to an international border. The agreements must  
9 establish protocols that:

- 10               (1) ensure confidentiality of the laboratory testing;  
11               (2) require the testing procedures to satisfy state  
12 standards for laboratory testing;  
13               (3) provide cost-effective resources to the local  
14 health departments to increase the availability of laboratory  
15 testing in the border counties;  
16               (4) enhance the laboratory testing capacity,  
17 including testing of human and nonhuman specimens, in the border  
18 counties; and  
19               (5) ensure the efficiency, effectiveness, and  
20 accuracy of laboratory test results.

21       Sec. 12.153. YEAR-ROUND ACCESS TO LABORATORY TESTING FOR  
22 VECTOR-BORNE INFECTIOUS DISEASES. Using available resources and as  
23 determined appropriate by the department, the department shall  
24 support access to year-round laboratory testing for vector-borne  
25 infectious diseases to record and address local outbreaks of  
26 vector-borne infectious diseases in the counties of this state that  
27 are most at risk for the year-round outbreaks, including Maverick,

1 Val Verde, Webb, Zapata, Starr, Hidalgo, Willacy, and Cameron  
2 Counties. The department may make the access directly available or  
3 through a local agreement entered into under Section 12.152. The  
4 testing may include, as appropriate:

- 5 (1) arboviral testing;
- 6 (2) speciation testing;
- 7 (3) PCR testing;
- 8 (4) IgM testing;
- 9 (5) IgG testing; and
- 10 (6) any other testing the department determines  
11 appropriate.

12 SECTION 2. The Department of State Health Services is  
13 required to implement a provision of this Act only if the  
14 legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose. If  
15 the legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that  
16 purpose, the department may, but is not required to, implement a  
17 provision of this Act using other appropriations available for that  
18 purpose.

19 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.