

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

DHFS 7/18/2003

LRB Number	03-1601/1	Introduction Number	SB-120	Estimate Type	Original
Subject					
Public health, mutual aid, emergency management, exemption from liability during an emergency and crime of releasing a harmful substance					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

SB 120 creates a number of mechanisms to enable the State to respond to public health hazards, including outbreaks of contagious disease and bioterrorism.

This bill creates a 17-member Public Health Council in the Department to advise the Governor, Legislature, and the public on progress in implementing DHFS's 10-year public health plan and coordination of responses to public health emergencies. It is assumed that the council will meet twice a year, at a cost of \$600 GPR annually for travel and per diem expenses.

The bill creates a sum sufficient appropriation in the Department, the purpose of which is to provide reimbursement to local health departments for all expenses incurred in quarantining a person outside his or her home during a declared state of emergency. Funding from the sum sufficient appropriation would be provided to the extent that federal funds are not available for this purpose.

Local public health agencies vary in size from between five and 300 employees, with budgets ranging from \$121,000 to \$26.5 million. The amount of funding required for a local public health department to quarantine individuals outside their homes during a state of emergency would depend on the nature and extent of the emergency, the number of local public health departments involved in it, the duration of the emergency and other factors which are not possible to predict.

The chief cost of the provision on quarantining will be an increase in the staff time of local public health agencies. Depending on the nature of the emergency and the extent of the quarantines required, local agencies may need to hire more staff. It is not possible to estimate the cost of additional staff required for quarantining without knowing the nature of the emergency.

It is unlikely that the state will have to purchase drugs in an emergency situation that requires a quarantine. The federal government maintains a drug stockpile for use during an outbreak of communicable disease or bioterrorism, and it is assumed that the state would be able to obtain drugs from this stockpile. In addition, the federal Hospital Bioterrorism Preparedness grant has provided funding for an in-state pharmaceutical stockpile.

The Department has a public health surveillance team which currently provides technical assistance and direction during public health emergencies, such as outbreaks of communicable disease or food poisoning. A declared public health emergency may result in the need for additional state staff, if the scope of the emergency is beyond the capacity of the current public health surveillance team. It is not possible to estimate the extent of the need for these staff nor how much those additional resources will cost.

Local governments will be responsible for security during a public health quarantine, which will result in higher costs to local agencies. Other effects on local governments will include loss of income by those affected by the quarantine and possibly increased health care costs for individuals in quarantine. It is not possible to estimate the extent of these costs.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications