



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

DAVID L. LAKEY, M.D.
COMMISSIONER

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December 20, 2011

Dear Colleague,

The Laboratory Services Section (LSS) is in the process of revising rules concerning fees for laboratory services. The proposed rules will be presented to the Department of State Health Services Council at the February 22 - February 23, 2012 meeting.

Unlike the existing rules, the fees listed in the proposed amendments will reflect the actual fee that will be charged rather than a maximum cap on a fee. The proposed amendments also include fees for new tests, and the deletion of some tests and their accompanying fees. As a result of these changes, fees for some tests may be higher or lower than the fees listed on the current fee schedule, which was last revised in September 2007.

The proposed amendments implement portions of Senate Bill 80, 82nd Legislature, Regular Session, 2011. This legislation requires that the LSS develop, document and implement procedures for setting fees using a documented methodology; analyze the department's costs; and update the laboratory fee schedule as necessary to cover the cost of providing the service.

Revisions to the existing laboratory fee schedule will impact those providers that purchase laboratory testing directly from the LSS. For laboratory customers that submit testing services for a DSHS program as a program contractor and/or authorized provider, there will be no additional fee for covered program testing. Examples of DSHS programs include Title V, TB Elimination, and HIV/STD. For a list of covered program testing, please contact the DSHS program with whom you are authorized to participate. If your facility has a contract with the Laboratory Services Section to provide specific testing, then you will be billed, as per the contract and will be provided with a 30-day notice of any changes to the fee schedule. All laboratory customers, including local health departments will be expected to cover the costs for testing services they request that are not covered by DSHS programs.

I request your assistance to determine what the impact of increasing fees to cover the costs of our testing services to you, our stakeholder, and to public health services in your community. Comments or questions about the proposed rules can be addressed to Norma Vela, Laboratory Services Section, MC 1947, P.O. Box 149347, Austin, TX 78714-9347 or via email at norma.vela@dshs.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Grace Kubin".

Grace Kubin, Ph.D.
Director, Laboratory Services Section