

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

September 22,
2016

2. Department

California Department of Public Health

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Branch

4. CEA Position Title

Chief, Infectious Diseases Laboratory Branch

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose. (2-3 sentences)

As Chief, Infectious Diseases Laboratory Branch, the incumbent will provide policy oversight to the Microbial Diseases Laboratory (MDL), Viral & Rickettsial Diseases Laboratory (VRDL) and the Infant Botulism Treatment & Prevention Program (IBTPP). The Chief provides an executive staff level focus for cross-cutting laboratory policy, operational (e.g., laboratory information system), and regulatory issues within the Division of Communicable Disease Control (DCDC). The Chief will be responsible for administrative oversight of the laboratories, ensuring that departmental policies with respect to contracting, purchasing, and human resources are carried out.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

Chief, Division of Communicable Disease Control

7. Relationship with Department Director (Select one)

- Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(Explain): Policy issues specific to the establishment of guidelines and protocols for new/emerging pathogens (i.e. Ebola & Zika) and pandemic outbreaks (such as flu, pertussis, etc.) require immediate & direct involvement with Exec Mgmt.

8. Organizational Level (Select one)

- 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

The Chief will be responsible for developing and setting policy, as well as protocols, coordinating and managing response to high profile public health disease outbreaks requiring laboratory involvement. The response to outbreaks may also include the development of policy and protocols related to confirmatory testing of emerging public health threats such as Ebola and Zika, and managing the surge capacity of the laboratories when necessary to respond to disease outbreaks such as pertussis, H1N1 and measles.

The Infectious Diseases Laboratory Chief integrates the activities of the infectious disease laboratories internally as well as with other state, local, and federal public health agencies to ensure consistency of compliance with current laboratory principles and practices. The Chief is responsible for: ensuring the Branch priorities meet the Department objectives; evaluating the effectiveness of the programs; and overseeing staff activities relative to the various advisory boards and committees acting as consultant bodies to DCDC.

The position is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Branch, and, as such, is directly involved in program policy, strategic planning and organization. This position is responsible for maintaining adequate policy, protocols and procedures to promote consistent and effective communicable diseases laboratory interventions to ensure the continued safety for California's population.

The Chief, Infectious Diseases Laboratory Branch will represent the laboratories at local, state and national professional and policy forums regarding public health infectious disease laboratory issues. The Chief will provide direct guidance related to infectious diseases laboratory issues to the infectious disease programs supported by the laboratories. The Chief will independently provide direct oversight to the Infant Botulism Treatment and Prevention Program, Microbial Diseases Laboratory Program and the Viral and Rickettsial Diseases Laboratory Program which are managed by a Public Health Medical Officer III (Supervisor), and two Research Scientist Managers (respectively).

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description: The programs within the Division of Communicable Disease Control strive to achieve the core mission of the department which is to optimize the health and well-being of the people in California by working to promptly identify, prevent and control infectious diseases that pose a threat to public health, including emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, vaccine-preventable agents, foodborn outbreaks, bacterial toxins, bioterrorism, and pandemics (e.g. avian influenza in humans). Specifically, the Infectious Diseases Laboratory Branch oversees the laboratories which provide vital reference, diagnostic and applied research activities for the detection, epidemiologic investigation, control and prevention of communicable diseases and provide and improve the treatment of infant botulism and related diseases, all of which are core public health functions.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

A reorganization of the laboratories within the Division of Communicable Disease Control, approved May 2015, created a new position to better align laboratory activities and foster opportunities for collaboration between the laboratories to address common challenges such as purchasing, recruitment and regulatory issues. In addition, the reorganization increased the ability of the Division of Communicable Disease Control to support strategic initiatives to strengthen and sustain the laboratories into the future. The reorganization resulted in the establishment of a new position, Chief, Infectious Diseases Laboratory Branch.

The Department redirected a vacant Public Health Medical Administrator I position to be used as the Chief, Infectious Diseases Laboratory Branch. The Department has been unsuccessful in recruiting applicants for the position as a Public Health Medical Administrator I (high-level, civil service position, including a strong policy role) since July 2015. The unique mix of requirements needed to meet the minimum qualifications of the classification in addition to the requirements of knowledge and experience in managing a public health laboratory resulted in only one applicant, who did not have the desired qualifications for the position.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The Chief, Infectious Diseases Laboratory Branch, will function as the lead on laboratory disease reporting policies and protocols. Broad reaching policy issues which are addressed on an ongoing basis include identifying confirmed disease laboratory reporting protocols in new and emerging diseases such as Ebola and Zika. New diseases require the development and implementation of protocols including standardized methods for how to capture the information, how diseases are diagnosed and how they are reported.

The Chief will work with the Division Chief, Communicable Disease Control, Center for Infectious Diseases and the Director on the development of new laboratory assays on novel and emerging infectious diseases such as Ebola and Zika. The recent rapid spread of these infectious diseases to California and neighboring states created a need to develop new testing and confirmatory technologies to identify and track disease outbreak within California. A recent example is the identification of a novel virus (H1N1 influenza) which was made by one of the CDPH infectious diseases laboratories in California. The identification of this novel virus resulted in the development of steps to monitor the situation in California and worldwide carefully; provide guidance and assistance to local health departments, health care providers, and the public; and assist local health departments with laboratory testing for the H1N1 virus.

In addition, there are several areas currently requiring strategic direction and policy within the Infectious Diseases Laboratory Branch which will have long term impact on the laboratories, internal and external partners they serve, and their ability to meet federal laboratory standards for public health laboratories. The lack of a fully automated laboratory information system to service the unique needs of the infectious disease laboratories requires significant human resources to maintain the manual system and has led to the need for ongoing improvement plans to ensure accurate inventories. A comprehensive approach based on newer technologies will improve the reliability of systems for tracking specimens in the laboratories and will include a cross-collaborative approach resulting in expanding the number of staff knowledgeable and able to support the laboratory information systems across the infectious disease laboratory spectrum and will create a system to better meet the needs of the internal programs supported by the laboratories as well as local public health department partners.

Another example of a policy area requiring over-arching strategy, decision making and implementation is the cross collaborative use of highly effective, cutting edge technology such as whole genome sequencing and mass spectrometers. The new technologies are being implemented at national levels and available to the infectious disease laboratories, however, it is not cost effective or possible to purchase the new technologies for each separate laboratory. Instead, a collaborative approach must be designed and implemented to achieve business efficiencies and meet the unique needs of each of the laboratories. The Chief will be the lead on ensuring an efficient and collaborative business model is developed to implement shared use of new technologies and equipment.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

Policy direction and strategic planning impacting the Infectious Diseases Laboratory Branch will be the primary responsibility of the Chief. The Division Chief has delegated the authority for broad policy decisions to this position to manage the laboratory programs within the Division of Communicable Disease.

The Chief, will function as the principle policy advisor on matters related to the laboratories for the Division and be responsible for collaborating with executives across infectious disease programs and laboratories. The Chief is the designated Director, State Public Health Laboratory as well as directors of other local public health laboratories. As the principle policy advisor, the Chief is responsible for the creation of guidance and the development of new testing protocols for new and emerging infectious diseases, which are critical in protecting the people in California from the threat of preventable infectious diseases.

Critical or broad reaching decision making impacting programs or laboratories beyond the infectious diseases laboratories will be made in collaboration with the Chief, Division of Communicable Disease Control (Public Health Medical Administrator II-CEA) and the Director, Office of the State Public Health Laboratory (CEA), and Deputy Director, Center for Infectious Diseases (CDC appointee).

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The Infectious Disease Laboratory Chief, CEA is primarily responsible for developing and implementing new and existing statewide policies for testing protocols for new and emerging infectious diseases. The Chief will develop the statewide policies in consultation with internal subject matter experts, the Chief of the Office of State Public Laboratory Director, members of CDPH Executive Management. Implementation of statewide policies will include internal partners and CDPH Executive Management and local partners, and may include both Agency and Governor's Office officials as well as national officials. In addition, the identification of novel viruses such as H1N1, Zika and Ebola result in the policy development to: monitor the situation in California and potentially worldwide; develop guidance to local health departments, health care providers, and the public; and assist local health departments with laboratory testing.