

Amendments to House Bill 690
Introduced Copy (White)

Requested by the Department of Public Health and Human Services

For the House Human Services Committee

1. Page 1, line 4.
Following: "CLUSTER"
Strike: "IDENTIFICATION"
Insert: "INVESTIGATION"
2. Page 1, line 10.
Following: "cluster"
Strike: "identification"
Insert: "investigation"
3. Page 1, lines 10 and 11.
Following: "report" on line 10
Strike: "--" on line 10 and "rulemaking" on line 11
4. Page 1, line 11.
Following: "protocol"
Strike: "by administrative rule"
Following: "to"
Strike: "identify"
Insert: "investigate"
Following: "disease clusters"
Strike: "through"
Insert: ", confirmed or perceived, utilizing"
5. Page 1, line 13.
Following: "communicable diseases,"
Strike: "or"
Following: "birth outcomes,"
Insert: "cancer, birth records and death records,"
Following: "particular care to"
Strike: "identify"
Insert: "investigate potential"
6. Page 1, line 15.
Following: "(2)"
Strike: "Upon identifying a"
Insert: "As part of the investigation of a potential"

7. Page 1, line 16.
Following: "disease cluster"
Strike: "was identified"
Insert: "potentially exists"

-End-

Prepared by:
Department of Public Health & Human Services
Ellie Parker, Legal Counsel, Telephone 444-2644
February 16, 2005 (10:25 a.m.)

Testimony in support of House Bill 690

By Jane Smilie, MPH, Administrator, Public Health & Safety Division, Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the record my name is Jane Smilie and I am the Administrator of the Public Health and Safety Division at the Department of Public Health & Human Services. The Public Health & Safety Division is responsible for collecting and analyzing information related to infectious and non-infectious disease and administering disease prevention and control programs.

The Department supports the intent of this bill to protect public health through investigation of disease clusters. The bill with the proposed amendments outlined by Rep. Gutsche, requires the Department to develop and follow a protocol to investigate reports of suspected disease clusters. In addition, it requires the Department to inform local public health officials when an investigation is underway in their jurisdiction, and to provide them with the results of the investigation. A protocol for investigating non-infectious disease clusters has recently been developed by the Division and includes communicating with local public health departments during these investigations.

House Bill 690 includes investigation of communicable disease clusters. Please note that we currently follow the requirements and protocols set out in state statute and administrative rule specific to reporting and investigating communicable diseases found in Montana. This work is also conducted in concert with local health departments.

The only mandatory non-infectious disease reporting system in Montana is the Central Tumor Registry that tracks cancer. For other non-infectious health events, there are no requirements to report to the Department. However, the Department can and does use information from a voluntary birth defects registry, Montana birth and death records, as well as health care claims to summarize non-infectious disease information at the county level.

In 2001, Rep. Gail Gutsche passed legislation that mandated the Department to study the development of a chronic disease registry. This led to our state being one of the first in the country to receive an Environmental Public Health Tracking grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. One of our goals for this new project is to develop the capacity to geographically map non-infectious disease data to increase our ability to identify clusters more proactively. We are working with Montana State Library on this project.

In conclusion, we support this bill with Rep. Gutsche's amendments and we currently have the capacity to fulfill the requirements. We would be pleased to provide additional information to this committee.

Thank you.

Committee: (H) Human Services
Hearing Date: 2/16/05
Hearing Time: 3 pm
Place: Room 472
Bill Sponsor: Rep. Gail Gutsche