



Health & Human Services Agency

COUNTY OF TULARE AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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District One

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District Two

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District Three

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District Five

AGENDA DATE: April 8, 2025

Public Hearing Required	Yes
Scheduled Public Hearing w/Clerk	Yes
Published Notice Required	Yes
Advertised Published Notice	Yes
Meet & Confer Required	N/A
Budget Transfer (Aud 308) attached	N/A
Personnel Resolution attached	N/A
Agreement(s) attached	N/A

CONTACT PERSON: Robert Stewart PHONE: 559-624-8000

SUBJECT: Public Hearing for Adoption of Fee Adjustments

REQUEST(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Conduct a public hearing considering the proposed fee adjustments for Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency: Public Guardian, Health Operations, and Environmental Health Divisions for Fiscal Year 2025/2026.
2. Adopt the fees recommended for the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency: Public Guardian, Health Operations, and Environmental Health Divisions to cover costs.
3. Authorize the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency: Public Guardian, Health Operations, and Environmental Health Divisions to implement the fees beginning July 1, 2025.

SUMMARY:

The Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) performs services for which fees may be charged for a reasonable recovery of incurred costs. HHSA reviews its fee schedule and calculates proposed fees based on current costs and reasonable cost recovery. The Agency's recommended adjustments for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 do not exceed the reasonable costs of providing the corresponding services.

The requested fee adjustments for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 are for the Public Guardian, Health Operations, and Environmental Health Divisions. The Summary of Proposed Fees for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 is attached to this agenda.

HHSA has received approval from the Auditor-Controller's office on the cost recovery methodology in establishing the proposed fee adjustments (attached to the Agenda).

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The public notice for the fee hearing was published in the Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register on March 26, 2025. The second posting appeared in the Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register on April 2, 2025. The public notice for the fee hearing was also published in the Porterville Recorder on March 26, 2025, and April 2, 2025. If approved, the adjustment to fees will take effect on July 1, 2025.

Proposed fee changes are:

Human Services Branch – Public Guardian Division

The Public Guardian Division assists individuals as a legally appointed conservator and is proposing one (1) fee increase to the Representative Payee program. The one (1) adjusted fee is listed in the attached summary of proposed fees.

Public Health Branch – Health Operations Division

County Health Care Centers

The Public Health Branch, Health Operations Division, is proposing to update the fee structure for its Tulare County Health Care Centers (TCHCC). These updates are in accordance with the Public Health Services Act, which requires that fees be sufficient to cover actual health center costs of operation and consistent with locally prevailing rates or charges. Fee updates include fifty-seven (57) new fees, one hundred fifty-seven (157) increases, and sixty (60) decreases.

TCHCC have consistently utilized a standard locally prevailing rate to set clinical service rates since 2012. A local survey of comparable healthcare centers in Tulare County in 2024 indicated an update to locally prevailing rates is needed. Therefore, TCHCC proposes setting the rates at 200% of Medicare or 200% of Medi-Cal when no Medicare rate exists (an increase over its current prevailing rate methodology of 150% of Medicare, or 200% of Medi-Cal when no Medicare rate exists).

These fees do not exceed the reasonable cost of providing the corresponding services to health care centers' patients.

Immunization Program's Travel Clinic

Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency's Immunization Program protects the community against vaccine-preventable diseases. The program furthermore provides travelers with required and recommended vaccines for entry into countries worldwide. Among the various vaccines the program offers, travel vaccines protect people during their time abroad, where they may be at higher risk for diseases than at home. The Immunizations Program proposes adding three (3) new immunization fees, deleting one (1) fee, and revising eight (8) fee descriptions.

The proposed fee increases are based on the current primary fee methodology at 150% of the Medicare rates, or if a fee is not Medicare reimbursable, the fee is set at 100% of

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the Medi-Cal reimbursement rate. New vaccine fees for the Immunizations Program were examined for compliance with a fee-setting standard of 150% of Medicare or 100% of Medi-Cal rates. This methodology has been in place since 2012 and may be adjusted in FY 2026/2027 to align with TCHHC, which is proposing an update to its methodology for FY 2025/2026, as discussed above.

The program helps ensure vaccine availability to protect against vaccine-preventable diseases. These fees do not exceed the reasonable cost of providing the immunizations.

Public Health Branch – Environmental Health Division

The Environmental Health Division acts as the agency responsible for inspecting and permitting various health permits in accordance with state and federal regulations set forth in the California Health and Safety Code and California Retail Food Code. The Environmental Health Division is proposing to add eight (8) new fees, increase ninety-two (92) fees, revise the description of one (1) fee, and delete four (4) fees.

The Environmental Health Division utilizes three methods to calculate fee amounts: 1) calculating the division's costs and time spent to complete each procedure; 2) subcontract pricing determined by the vendor providing the service; and 3) pricing set by the State of California. Four (4) out of the eight (8) new fees were determined by evaluating the estimated time to complete each procedure based on the Environmental Health Supervisors' expertise. Supervisors have estimated the time needed for an Environmental Health Specialist to conduct each respective inspection, an Office Assistant to complete the billing, and an Environmental Health Supervisor to review the inspection. For the cost of each new procedure, the salary and benefits costs of employees performing the procedure have been calculated based on the time estimate, along with the cost of supplies and overhead costs, which have also been factored in. One (1) of the remaining four (4) new fees were based on pricing set by the State of California. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) sets fees for dairy products, including soft-serve ice cream products, by regulation. The other three (3) new fees were determined by similar fees set in Tulare County (e.g. the paper copy fee and returned check fee).

The Environmental Health Division proposes ninety-two (92) fee adjustments. All ninety-two fees are determined by calculating the division's costs and time spent completing each procedure. The cost calculations are based on Environmental Health Specialists' actual time spent performing the procedure(s) as determined by daily time studies taken throughout the year and proportional costs for supervision and overhead expenses. It should also be noted that water analysis services are completely voluntary on the client's part, and clients are free to choose a vendor other than those contracted through the County.

The four (4) proposed deletions are to consolidate and simplify the fee schedule.

These fees do not exceed the reasonable cost of providing the corresponding services.

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FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING:

The revenue from the proposed fee adjustments will be included in the revenue projections for the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 proposed budget. There is no net County cost to the General Fund.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF TULARE STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN:

The County's five-year strategic plan includes the Quality of Life Initiative to promote public health and welfare. The fee adjustments will allow Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency to continue to provide valuable services to our community members through our regulatory and service activities.

ADMINISTRATIVE SIGN-OFF:

/s/Robert C. Stewart

Robert C. Stewart

Director of Fiscal Operations

Cc: County Administrative Office

Attachments: Attachment A-Summary of Proposed Fees
Attachment B-Notice of Approval (Auditor)
Attachment C-Notice of Hearing
Attachment D-PowerPoint presentation