



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 7/8/2025

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Health Services
Staff Name and Phone Number: Nolan Sullivan, 707-565-4774
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Department of Health Services Fees Resolutions

Recommended Action:

The Department of Health Services recommends the Board of Supervisors take the following actions. ☐

- A) Adopt a resolution establishing new and amended fees to recover the reasonable cost of providing services associated with Sonoma County Animal Services, effective July 8, 2025, pursuant to Sonoma County Code Chapter 5, Section 5-4.
- B) Adopt a resolution establishing new and amended fees to recover the reasonable cost of providing services associated with Environmental Health for the Department of Health Services, effective July 8, 2025, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 101325.
- C) Adopt a resolution establishing new and amended fees to recover the reasonable cost of providing services associated with the Sonoma County Department of Health Services Public Health Laboratory, effective July 8, 2025, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 101325.
- D) Adopt a resolution establishing new and amended fees to recover the projected costs of providing Driving Under the Influence Program services for the Department of Health Services, effective July 8, 2025, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 101325.

Executive Summary:

The Department of Health Services (hereinafter, "DHS" or "the Department") is proposing new and amended fees effective July 8, 2025, for services associated with the Sonoma County Animal Services, Environmental Health and Safety, Public Health Laboratory, and Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Program services. The Board of Supervisors is authorized to establish fees to recover the reasonable cost of providing certain services. Fees are imposed for a specific benefit conferred or service provided directly to the payor that is not provided to those not charged, and which does not exceed the reasonable cost to provide the benefit or service. Fees are also imposed for reasonable regulatory costs including enforcement inspections, investigations, and audits.

The Board of Supervisors may update Sonoma County Animal Services fees and charges for services by via adoption of resolution (Attachment 2), pursuant to the authority granted in [Sonoma County Code Chapter 5, Section 5-4 <https://library.municode.com/ca/sonoma_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CH5SOCOANREOR_ARTIGEPR_S5-4AUSEFECH>](https://library.municode.com/ca/sonoma_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CH5SOCOANREOR_ARTIGEPR_S5-4AUSEFECH). The Board may update fees associated with Environmental Health, Public Health Lab and the DUI program via adoption of a resolution (Attachments 4, 7,

and 11), pursuant to [Health and Safety Code Section 101325](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=HSC&division=101.&title=&part=3.&chapter=4.&article=1.>) [<https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=HSC&division=101.&title=&part=3.&chapter=4.&article=1.>](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=HSC&division=101.&title=&part=3.&chapter=4.&article=1.>). Pursuant to [Title 9 of the California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=I5B643BF04C6B11EC93A8000D3A7C4BC3&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=%28sc.Default%29>) [<https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=I5B643BF04C6B11EC93A8000D3A7C4BC3&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=%28sc.Default%29>](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=I5B643BF04C6B11EC93A8000D3A7C4BC3&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=%28sc.Default%29>), fees associated with DUI Program must also be approved by the California Department of Health Care Services prior to the fee increase going into effect.

Sonoma County Animal Services estimated revenue based on proposed fee amounts is \$852,687, an increase of \$17,375 over current fee estimates. The Board approved an ongoing General Fund subsidy of \$287,901 on May 14, 2024 which is continued in FY 25/26. . □

Environmental Health estimated revenue based on proposed fee amounts is \$7,686,487, a \$92,367 decrease from the prior year's fee estimates. The Board approved an ongoing General Fund subsidy of \$34,682 on March 26, 2024 which is continued in FY 25/26. Public Health Laboratory estimated revenue based on proposed fee amounts is \$461,192, an increase of \$48,957 over current fee estimates.

DUI estimated revenue based on proposed fee amounts is \$2,877,445, an increase of \$746,004 over current fee estimates.

Discussion:

Sonoma County Animal Services

Sonoma County Animal Services (SCAS) provides sheltering and field services to areas within their jurisdiction, including unincorporated areas of the County, the City of Santa Rosa, and the City of Healdsburg. SCAS is also responsible for rabies control for the entire County. The SCAS service area is comprised of approximately 1,575 square miles, comprised of nearly 500,000 residents, and includes an animal shelter that serves nearly 2,500 animals annually.

Program Fees

The Department is proposing fee revisions to all SCAS fees. In addition, five new fees have been included in the recommended fees and charges schedule to recover costs and process deposits.

In 2024, the Department engaged Wohlford Consulting to conduct an objective analysis of the full costs incurred by SCAS and associated fees to determine proposed FY 2025-2026 fees (Attachment 3). The studies reviewed annual volumes of each fee, the amount of time spent by staff on each fee activity and the annual costs of each staff member and the unit's overhead costs. During the fee study, it was determined that 70% of SCAS costs were attributed to salaries and benefits, and the remaining 30% to supplies and services. Fees are estimated to match full cost recovery, but the fees recommended to the Board here take into account additional policy considerations such as concerns that if some fees are set too high, this could discourage people from working through county channels for adoptions and reclaiming pets, ultimately resulting in overcrowding and associated costs. Based on the information from the 2024 fee studies, cost recovery is weighed against affordability and review of fees from other local animal shelters. Maintaining market affordability and encouraging animal owner compliance with applicable laws will supersede full cost recovery in setting some of the fees. While the estimated revenue from setting fees at full cost recovery is \$2,004,019, the estimated revenue based on the proposed fees for FY 2025-2026 is \$852,687, which leaves a gap of \$1,151,332 in SCAS costs that the proposed fees will not recover. In addition to the SCAS General Fund

allocation of \$2,173,837, the FY 2025-2026 Adopted Budget allocates \$542,363 of the Department's non-animal services annual General Fund allocation to cover these costs. □

Fee Increases over 3% and New Fees

FY 2025-2026 Fee increases vary between 2% and 43%. Fees recommended for increases above 3% are recommended to recoup actual costs.

Five new fees were added to provide the public with private cremation options for their pets and includes the addition of a commercial dog walker permit fee to provide oversight and safety for the burgeoning private dog walker business:

- Private Pet Cremations 3-49lbs: \$115.00
- Private Pet Cremations 50-99lbs: \$150.00
- Private Pet Cremations 100+lbs: \$235.00
- Private Pet Cremation Processing: \$17.00
- Commercial Dog Walker Permit: \$100.00

SCAS estimated revenue based on proposed fee amounts is \$852,687, an increase of \$17,375 over current fee estimates.

Environmental Health and Safety

Environmental Health and Safety programs promote health and quality of life by preventing or controlling those diseases that result from interactions between people and the places they live, work, and play. Environmental Health programs employ several strategies to prevent health hazards including education, trend surveillance and analysis, routine inspections, response to citizen tips, sampling and posting, and enforcement where necessary. Environmental Health charges fees to recover its costs to provide services to members of the public who receive permits and benefit from Environmental Health's services. By implementing reasonable fees, Environmental Health ensures the sustainability of programs, supports staff and resources, and creates healthier living environments.

Environmental Health has a fee stabilization fund which was established to shield permit holders from extreme one-time rate increases that may be detrimental to their business operations. California Health and Safety Code authorizes Environmental Health to establish fees for service that cover the cost of services and the reasonable cost to run the program. Proposition 26 requires that all fees being charged to rate payers be for specific services and not services that provide a benefit for the entire community. As of December 2024, the fund balance is \$3,978,676 and has been sourced from penalties, unanticipated revenue, and other cost saving. It can be used to stabilize fees by offsetting costs charged to fees such as staffing, program improvements, education, technology, and other essential environmental health program services. The Department is proposing to utilize the fund balance in FY 2025-2026 to shield environmental health permit holders from the rising costs of providing services.

Program Fees

In 2024, the Department engaged Wohlford Consulting to conduct a comprehensive analysis of user fees for FY 2024-2025 (Attachment 6). The study utilized a unit cost build-up methodology to establish the full cost of fee activities, considering factors like staff time and associated costs. By projecting annual service volume and

revenue at full cost levels, the study ensured accuracy in fee determination.

The hourly rate is the primary factor in calculating Environmental Health service costs; this rate differs from the annual or monthly billing rate for the fee on the schedule. For FY 2025-2026, the full cost recovery hourly rate increased by 2.7% from \$261 to \$268. For FY 2025-2026, the Department is proposing to hold the fees the same as FY 2024-2025 and utilize the fee stabilization fund to cover any gap between revenues and expenditures. The estimated gap for FY 2025-2026 is \$92,367. For the future, the fund balance may continue to be used to offset the cost increases in a phased-in approach to minimize the gap and reduce the impact of full cost recovery rates.

New Fees

Three new fees were added:

- Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation program: \$1,044
- Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation w/waiver: \$688
- Solid Waste Non-Operational Site - 4/year fee: \$5,841

The Department will monitor fiscal impacts due to the new Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation program including the local waiver process allowing a reduced fee to qualifying small businesses and consider any adjustments that may be needed in the future.

For Environmental Health, the fee schedule for FY 2025-2026 (Attachment 5) recommends no fee adjustments due to recommending use of the fee stabilization fund balance.

Public Health Laboratory

The Public Health Laboratory provides clinical, environmental, and rabies testing. These fee-based testing services aid doctors, hospitals, acute care facilities, environmental health agencies, and Sonoma County Animal Services in diagnosing and performing enforcement duties.

Program Fees

The Public Health Laboratory Fee Schedule was last updated for FY 2023-2024. Because no fee increase was implemented in FY 2024-2025, the Department is proposing an approximate 8% increase to most Public Health Laboratory fees. Revised fees are requested to recover increased labor and supply costs that have been determined by Wohlford Consulting's fee study which was completed in 2025 (Attachment 10). □

Public Health Laboratory fees (Attachment 8) are set at below full-cost recovery amounts and are subsidized with grants and 1991 Health Realignment funding. The subsidy is not based on a per fee rate, but on the overall Public Health Laboratory cost. In FY 2024-2025, Realignment funding subsidized a budgeted amount of \$727,000. Providing market-rate, subsidized services to the public and non-government organizations allows the Department to recover a portion of the cost of operating the laboratory by performing tests that meet a public benefit.

Fee Increases over 3% and New Fees

Public Health Laboratory fees will see an approximate 8% increase across all categories, due to the results of Wohlford Consulting's cost study. This includes substantial increases in the Clinical Molecular Laboratory, which will see a 31% increase in the Xpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2/Flu/RSV fee, correcting a prior fee calculation error.

New Fees

Other significant fee additions include new tests for Matrix Assisted Laser Desorption/Ionization-Time of Flight (MALDI-TOF) Identification for bacterial and mycobacterial organisms, a variety of CDC Human Influenza panels, and wastewater surveillance services, such as SARS-CoV-2 and respiratory panels, along with sequencing services. Additionally, the Brucella species RT-PCR test, previously exempt under Biothreat Agent testing, will now be fee-based under the Clinical Molecular Laboratory because Brucella was removed from the Select Agent List. □

Other new fees introduced cover specialized areas like algal toxin testing, with fees for Microcystins, Cylindrospermin, and Anatoxin-a; this is a new service being offered at the Sonoma County Public Health Laboratory. There are also new charges for tick identification (historically, a complementary service rolled into the Tick Test for Lyme), wastewater surveillance bundles (new service), and bacterial pathogen sequencing (new service). Some existing tests have been updated or removed, such as the Herpes Simplex Virus RT-PCR, and the Influenza assays have been replaced with those capable of detecting Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. These changes will impact several public health areas, including environmental health, clinical diagnostics, and emergency preparedness, generating new revenue streams across various laboratory services.

The overall increase in revenue for FY 2025-2026 Public Health Laboratory services is estimated at \$48,957.

Additional information specific to Public Health Laboratory fees is available in Attachment 9. □

Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Program

The Department's DUI program is a state mandated program which includes court-referred programs for individuals convicted of driving under the influence offenses. Each year the DUI program serves approximately 3,300 distinct clients. The goal of the DUI program is to reduce the likelihood a client will experience further DUI violations. Program components are designed to provide structured education, prevention, and monitoring to assist in identifying and resolving alcohol or other drug related problems.

The Department's DUI program includes a 3-, 6-, and 9-month First Offender programs, an 18-month Multiple Offender program, and a 6-week Wet-and-Reckless program (a lesser charge usually applied in the case of reckless driving with a measurable amount of alcohol in the system).

Program Fees

In FY 2024-2025, the Department contracted Wohlford Consulting to conduct an analysis of the costs associated with DUI Program services and to determine proposed FY 2025-2026 fees (Attachment 14). This proposed fee increase has been developed in accordance with California law governing services to persons convicted of driving while under the influence of alcohol and other drugs ([CCR Title 9, Division 4, Chapter 3 <https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=I5B643BF04C6B11EC93A8000D3A7C4BC3&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=%28sc.Default%29>](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=I5B643BF04C6B11EC93A8000D3A7C4BC3&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=%28sc.Default%29>)).

The Department is requesting approval of a 35% increase to the current DUI Program fee structure (5 fees total) as outlined in Attachment 12, to recover the reasonable cost of providing DUI program services. The proposed 35% fee increase for the DUI Program will be paid solely by clients who enroll after the new rates take effect. These clients, mandated to complete the program as part of regaining or retaining their driver's licenses following DUI convictions, fund approximately 65% of the program's costs through fees. While clients on General Assistance pay a reduced rate of \$5 per month, others pay between 20-50% at intake, with the

remainder covered through payment plans adjusted for financial need. The increased fees will be used to offset rising expenses, including significant increases in staff salaries and benefits, higher operational and facility costs, and expanded technology requirements for virtual service delivery.

New Fees

The DUI Program is adding one (1) new Late Payment fee to recover operational costs associated with the additional labor required for staff to document late payments, send past-due notices, update participant statuses, and add alerts to accounts. The fee adjustments aim to make the program financially self-sustaining without significantly impacting participation, as enrollment is a legal requirement for many clients.

Fee Increases over 3% and New Fees

A comprehensive cost analysis for the DUI program has not been done in years, despite steadily rising expenses driven by inflation, a shortage of certified Alcohol & Other Drugs (AOD) counselors, and increased charges from the State Department of Health Care Services. Between 2019 and 2024, salaries for key staff roles rose, and by 2024, personnel costs made up 83% of all program expenses. Additional cost pressures stem from increased DUI caseloads and investments in essential tools like virtual service software and updated curricula. Wohlford Consulting's fee study (see Attachment 14), which detailed the costs of service delivery and determined full cost recovery fees-figures that exceed those currently proposed due to policy and affordability considerations. As shown in Attachment 13, the Department's recommended 35% fee increase will not fully close the funding gap, which reached over \$1 million in FY 2023-2024, but will raise \$746,004 in additional revenue. For FY 2025-2026, projected revenues of \$2.88 million still fall short of the \$3.66 million in estimated program costs, with the remaining deficit to be covered by existing DHS General Fund allocations. Total increased revenue associated with the proposed adjustments to DUI Program services is expected to be \$746,004. Total revenue due to DUI Program fees is expected to be \$2,877,445. □

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

On May 14, 2024, the Board adopted an Ordinance titled "An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, Adopting New Fees and Adjusting Fees Effective July 1, 2024, for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Sonoma County **Animal Services**."

On March 26, 2024, the Board adopted a resolution reading the title and waiving further reading of a proposed ordinance titled "An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, Adopting New Fees and Adjusting Fees Effective July 1, 2024, for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Sonoma County **Animal Services**" and adopted a resolution establishing new and amended fees to recover the reasonable cost of providing services associated with **Environmental Health** and Safety for the Department of Health Services, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 101325, effective July 1, 2024.

On April 19, 2022, the Board adopted an ordinance titled "An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, Adopting New Fees and Adjusting Fees Effective July 1, 2022 for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services **Public Health Laboratory** and **Animal Services**."

On July 12, 2016, the Board adopted a resolution establishing new and amended fees to recover projected

costs of providing **Driving Under the Influence Program** services for the Department of Health Services effective July 12, 2016.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$719,969	\$719,969	\$719,969
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$719,969	\$719,969	\$719,969
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$719,969	\$719,969	\$719,969
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$719,969	\$719,969	\$719,969

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The fee adjustments included in this item are estimated to net to \$719,969 in additional revenue. Total forecasted revenues for Sonoma County Animal Services (SCAS) is \$852,687, Environmental Health (EH) is \$7,686,487, Clinical Laboratory (Lab) is \$461,192, and Driving Under the Influence (DUI) is \$2,877,445 for a total of \$11,877,811 as seen in table below.

DHS Fee Items for 2025/2026

Division	Current Revenue Estimate	Fee Increase Revenue Estimate	Net Revenue with Fee Increase
SCAS	\$835,312	\$852,687	\$17,375
EH	\$7,778,854	\$7,686,487	(\$92,367)
Lab	\$412,235	\$461,192	\$48,957
DUI	\$2,131,441	\$2,877,445	\$746,004
Totals	\$11,157,842	\$11,877,811	\$719,969

Staffing Impacts:

Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Sonoma County Animal Services

Attachment 1 - Animal Services Fee Chart

Attachment 2 - Animal Services Resolution

Attachment 3 - Animal Services Fee Study Report

Environmental Health

Attachment 4 - Environmental Health Resolution

Attachment 5 - Environmental Health Fee Chart

Attachment 6 - Environmental Health Fee Study Report

Public Health Laboratory

Attachment 7 - Public Health Laboratory Resolution

Attachment 8 - Public Health Laboratory Fee Chart

Attachment 9 - Public Health Laboratory Additional Fee Information

Attachment 10 - Public Health Laboratory Fee Study Report

Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Program

Attachment 11 - DUI Resolution

Attachment 12 - DUI Program Fee Chart

Attachment 13 - DUI Fee Study Additional Information

Attachment 14 - DUI & Treatment Accountability for Safe Communities Program Fee Study Report

Attachment 15 - Presentation

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A