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AB 1741: CLINICAL LABORATORY WORKFORCE

IN BRIEF:

To address the workforce shortage in the clinical laboratory industry, AB 1741 would update the California Clinical Laboratory Scientists (CLS) licensure requirements by expanding the activities that an unlicensed person can perform and assist under the direct and constant supervision of a licensed person. It will also allow this experience to count towards qualifications for California licensure.

EXISTING LAW:

In addition to meeting Federal Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA) standards, lab personnel in California are required to obtain CLS licensure by the state of California.

In March 2020, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order waiving the state licensing requirement for COVID-19 testing allowing those who meet the Federal CLIA standards but lack a California-specific license to do COVID-19 testing. Relaxing the licensure requirements for COVID-19 testing allowed laboratories to meet testing demand during the pandemic.

THE ISSUE:

The clinical lab industry is experiencing a severe workforce shortage, especially with clinical laboratory scientists. While there is relief for COVID-19 testing, the shortage of clinical laboratory scientists still impacts laboratories' ability to process all other types of tests.

Recognizing the problem, CDPH's Clinical Laboratory Technology Advisory Committee (CLTAC) created a workforce subcommittee to study the issue and propose recommendations to address the shortage. These included updating training programs and trainee-licensee ratios, developing accelerated pathways to CLS licensure and updating licensing requirements.

THE SOLUTION:

AB 1741 will help the clinical lab industry meet high testing demands and provide accurate care. Building off the recommendations of the CLTAC subcommittee, this bill expands the activities that unlicensed personnel can perform under the supervision of licensed personnel and allows that experience to count as qualification for licensure. These changes will help alleviate the workforce shortage in labs, improve laboratory testing capacity, and create new jobs in the industry.

SPONSOR:

Quest Diagnostics
California Clinical Laboratory Association

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