

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS  
ACTION AGENDA SUMMARY

DEPT: Health Services Agency *max*

BOARD AGENDA # \*B-6

Urgent  Routine

AGENDA DATE May 18, 2010

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES  NO   
(Information Attached)

4/5 Vote Required YES  NO

SUBJECT:

Authorization for the Health Services Agency to Support Olivia Tong's application for an H-1B VISA (U.S. Work Permit)

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Authorize the Health Services Agency to Support Olivia Tong's application for an H-1B VISA (U.S. Work Permit)
2. Authorize the Health Services Agency to pay the required \$1,500 for the immigration and naturalization service (INS) filing fee.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services requires employers to sponsor alien employees in their applications for a U.S. Work Permit (H-1B Visa), including payment of the filing fee of \$1,500. Funding for this fee is included in the Health Services Agency's 2009-2010 budget. There is no impact to the County General Fund.

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2010-304

On motion of Supervisor Chiesa, Seconded by Supervisor Monteith

and approved by the following vote,

Ayes: Supervisors: Chiesa, Monteith, and Chairman Grover

Noes: Supervisors: O'Brien, and DeMartini

Excused or Absent: Supervisors: None

Abstaining: Supervisor: None

1)  Approved as recommended

2)  Denied

3)  Approved as amended

4)  Other:

MOTION: THIS ITEM WAS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR AND PLACED ON NON-CONSENT FOR DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION

*Christine Ferraro*

ATTEST: CHRISTINE FERRARO TALLMAN, Clerk

File No.

**DISCUSSION:**

On April 3, 2007 the Board of Supervisors authorized the Health Services Agency to support Olivia Tong's application for an H-1B Visa and the payment of \$1,500 for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services filing fee. In order to retain Ms. Tong as an Epidemiologist for the County, the Health Services Agency (HSA) is requesting authorization to support her extension application for an H-1B Visa, including the \$1,500 filing fee.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services require employers to sponsor alien employees in their application for an U.S. Work Permit, including payment of the filing fee of \$1,500. The U.S. Work Permit is non-transferable; it does not allow the employee to work for any other employer. An employee may hold an H-1B status for up to 6 years at a time. Initially the H-1B Visa is issued for a period of 3 years. It is possible to extend the Visa by another 3 years on renewal. There are specific documents that the U.S. State Department requires for a renewal/extension of the H-1B Visa. Ms. Tong has satisfied these requirements.

Ms. Tong holds a Master of Science degree in Epidemiology from the University of Albany, State University of New York, a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Public Health and Safety from Ryerson Polytechnic University, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Biology from the University of Toronto.

Assessment of the health of a community is one of the critical functions of the Health Services Agency Public Health division. This position is dedicated to planning conducting and evaluating epidemiological studies to determine patterns of disease and health conditions. This position requires the coordination of activities and collaboration with staff involved with field work data collection and related support aspects of such studies. As an Epidemiologist, Ms. Tong analyzes communicable disease data including case reports, health statistics, demographic information, vital statistics, and laboratory results. In addition to producing complex data and information, Ms. Tong assists in the development of strategies to address particular areas of need. Her duties include coordinating data collection activities with other divisions of health and social services and outside agencies, and review of findings of epidemiological investigations, interpretation of results, and assessment of risk of epidemics and communicable disease of environmental hazards. She advises officials including the Public Health Officer, about the potential of active epidemic trends, characteristics and possible causation and control procedures.

Authorization for the Health Services Agency to support Olivia Tong's extension application for an H-1B Visa (U.S. Work Permit)

Page 3

Successful recruitment of an epidemiologist and the process to familiarize with agency and the local environment is time consuming. Since joining the Health Services Agency, Ms. Tong has worked with the Public Health staff including Emergency Preparedness staff and Emergency Operations, and has produced surveillance data and analyses which involve compilation of complex data. This data highlights major health concerns, supports grant applications for funding and is the bases for prioritization of efforts. With her research abilities and analysis of statistical data, she has made exceptional contributions to HSA since her employment.

**POLICY ISSUES:**

Approval of this recommendation supports the Board's priorities of A Healthy Community and Efficient Delivery of Public Services, by retaining a qualified and productive employee.

**STAFFING IMPACT:**

There is no staffing impact associated with this item.

**DEPARTMENT CONTACT:**

Cle Moore 209-558-6833