



## BUDGET SECTION - HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

Wednesday, June 19, 2024  
Brynhild Haugland Room, State Capitol  
Bismarck, North Dakota

Representative Jon O. Nelson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:18 p.m.

**Members present:** Representatives Jon O. Nelson, Bert Anderson, Jay Fisher, Alisa Mitskog, Emily O'Brien, Greg Stemen\*; Senators Randy A. Burckhard, Kyle Davison, Dick Dever, Curt Kreun, Tim Mathern\*

**Members absent:** Representatives Gary Kreidt, Randy A. Schobinger, Michelle Strinden

**Others present:** Donna Aukland, Wayne Salter, Dirk Wilke, Jessica Thomasson, Sara Stolt, and Marcie Wuitschick, Department of Health and Human Services

*\*Attended remotely.*

Chairman Nelson provided comments regarding the intent of the committee and its focus on the budget and divisions of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

At the request of Chairman Nelson, Mr. Adam Mathiak, Senior Fiscal Analyst, Legislative Council, presented a [memorandum](#) regarding the duties of the division.

At the request of Chairman Nelson, Mr. Toby S. Mertz, Fiscal Analyst, Legislative Council, presented the [base budget summary of DHHS](#), the department's [compliance with legislative intent](#), and selected [trust fund analyses](#) related to the department.

[In response to a question from a committee member](#), Ms. Donna Aukland, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Health and Human Services, ~~answered a question from a committee member regarding the Community Connect and Free Through Recovery programs.~~ She noted the department is working with the Department of Corrections [and Rehabilitation](#) to determine funding requirements for the 2025-27 biennium ~~for the cCommunity cConnect and fFree tThrough rRecovery programs.~~

Mr. Wayne Salter, Commissioner, Department of Health and Human Services, provided information ([Appendix A](#)) regarding the department's vision, mission, strategic priorities, [and](#) guiding principles, and presented the department's organizational chart.

Ms. Aukland provided information regarding the department's 2023-25 biennium budget. She noted the department has a total budget of over \$6 billion; including amounts from the Human Services and Public Health appropriation bills, ~~carryover items and amounts~~ [funding continued](#) from the 2021-23 biennium, appropriation amounts from policy bills, and amounts from the Office of Management and Budget [funding](#) pools.

Ms. Aukland provided updates on initiatives ~~passed~~ [approved](#) during the 2023-25 biennium, including the family ~~paid caregiver pilot program~~ [caregiver service pilot project](#), North Dakota child care initiative, expansion of federally qualified health centers, Community Health Worker Task Force, opioid settlement fund, and behavioral health facility grants. She noted:

- 439 applications have been submitted for the family ~~paid caregiver pilot program~~ [caregiver service pilot project](#) as of June 17, 2024.
- Distribution of ~~the 1<sup>st</sup> year~~ funds to federal qualified health centers occurred in November 2023 ~~for the first 1st year of the biennium~~ and the distribution of ~~the 2<sup>nd</sup> year~~ funds ~~for the second~~ [2nd year](#) will occur in July 2024.

- The ~~community health worker task force~~ Community Health Worker Task Force began in October 2023 with APT Solutions, Inc., contracted to facilitate the meetings.
- 14 grants were awarded in January 2024 to agencies for opioid remediation and abatement efforts.
- CHI St. Alexius Health ~~(of Williston)~~ was contracted with during the 2023-2025 biennium using behavioral health facility grant funding to serve the northwest region.

In response to a question from a committee member, Mr. Dirk Wilke, ~~Public Health~~-Executive Director, Public Health Division Department of Health and Human Services DHHS, ~~answered a question regarding the rural ambulance districts~~. He noted an additional \$7 million in ongoing funding was added from the community health trust fund for rural emergency medical services grants for the 2023-25 biennium.

Ms. Jessica Thomasson, Executive Director, Human Services Division, Department of Health and Human Services, provided information (Appendix B) regarding the progress of initiatives included in the North Dakota child care initiative pursuant to House Bill No. 1540 (2023). She noted \$2 million of funding for stipends for child care worker training was appropriated and \$1 million was allocated to 135 child care providers for child care facility improvement grants during the 2023-25 biennium. ~~She also~~ noted mobile finger printing machines are located at human service centers in Williston, Jamestown, and Fargo and each machine cost \$21,000.

Ms. Marcie Wuitschick, Chief Human Resources Officer, Department of Health and Human Services, provided information regarding the department's share of the targeted market equity pool. She noted 1,091 employees received targeted market equity increases.

Ms. Sara Stolt, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Health and Human Services DHHS, provided information regarding the Public Health ~~d~~ Division's new and vacant full-time equivalent (FTE) positions funding pool, the Public Health division's turnover, and the department's pilot of the ~~payroll FTE positions~~ salaries and wages block grant. She noted \$115,102 was transferred from the new and vacant FTE positions funding pool for 5 positions that were reclassified from temporary to full-time and the department has added 189.5 full-time employees (86.75 new FTE positions and 102.75 positions reclassified from temporary to full-time) since the implementation of the ~~payroll FTE position~~ salaries and wages block grant.

Ms. Aukland provided information regarding the DHHS budget and the Public Health, Human Services, and Business Operations ~~d~~ Division budgets. She noted 95 percent of the department's budget is within four ~~line items~~ major areas: salaries and benefits (9 percent); information technology - contractual services (4 percent); operating/professional fees and services (6 percent); and grants, refunds, and transfers (76 percent). ~~During discussion of the new State Laboratory building, s~~ She noted the department executed a guaranteed maximum bid contract for the new state laboratory building in April 2024 and construction began in April 2024 with ~~an~~ estimated completion in June 2026.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND STAFF DIRECTIVES

Chairman Nelson announced the Budget Section - Human Resources Division will tentatively schedule ~~tea~~ meeting in July 2024 at the ~~North Dakota State Hospital in Jamestown~~. He noted the committee will:

- Tour the State Hospital, demolition areas, and proposed location of the new State Hospital.
- Receive updates regarding the new State Hospital design, Avel ~~E-care~~ Care, and ~~Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics~~ certified community behavioral health clinics.
- Receive an overview of the Behavioral Health Division of DHHS.

No further business appearing, Chairman Nelson adjourned the meeting at 3:41 p.m.

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Toby S. Mertz  
Fiscal Analyst

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Adam Mathiak  
Senior Fiscal Analyst

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