



HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, December 18, 2023
Roughrider Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Representative Matthew Ruby, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Representatives Matthew Ruby, Karen A. Anderson, Mike Beltz, Kathy Frelich, Alisa Mitskog, Karen M. Rohr, Mary Schneider, Greg Stemen; Senators Sean Cleary, Dick Dever, Kathy Hogan, Judy Lee, Kent Weston

Members absent: Representatives Jayme Davis, Dwight Keifert, Brandon Prichard, Michelle Strinden; Senator Kyle Davison

Others present: See [Appendix A](#)

It was moved by Senator Hogan, seconded by Representative Frelich, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the August 29, 2023, meeting be approved as distributed.

STUDY OF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Ms. Jessica Thomasson, Executive Director, Human Services Division, Department of Health and Human Services, presented information ([Appendix B](#)) regarding child care programs and services in the state. She reviewed:

- Statistics relating to the child care assistance, working parent child care relief, best in class, and Waterford upstart programs, child care inclusion grants, the quality rating and improvement system, and the child care workforce registry.
- Costs of child care statewide compared to household income.
- Availability of start-up and expansion grants for new and existing child care programs.
- Department goals relating to reading proficiency and emerging literacy components.

In response to questions from committee members, Ms. Thomasson noted the department will increase the time to submit additional information during the child care enrollment application process from 10 to 30 days in an effort to reduce the denial rate.

Ms. Thomasson presented information ([Appendix C](#)) regarding implementation progress of child care programs provided for in House Bill No. 1540 (2023). She reviewed the status of 14 child care initiatives outlined in the bill.

In response to a question from a committee member, Mr. Thomasson noted the department has decided to eliminate copays for the lowest income families in the child care assistance program.

Ms. Jennifer Palmer, Senior Policy Specialist, Children & Families, National Conference of State Legislatures, presented information ([Appendix D](#)) regarding trends and innovations in child care policy in other states, including:

- American Rescue Plan Act funds for child care.
- State programs and initiatives including wage supplements, bonuses, and benefits relating to early childhood workforce.
- Trends and innovations in employer supported child care, including various state tri-share models.

- Protections and support for home-based and family, friend, and neighbor care.
- Funding policies for state child care programs, including local investment matching, taxes, tax relief, and land grant funds.

STUDY OF PAYMENT RATES FOR INTERMEDIATE CARE FACILITIES

Ms. Tina Bay, Director, Developmental Disabilities Division, Department of Health and Human Services, presented information ([Appendix E](#)) regarding payment rates for intermediate care facilities. She reviewed:

- Costs included in the all-inclusive daily rate.
- Components included in the intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disability (ICF/ID) payment rate.
- Alvarez & Marsal's gap analysis of developmental disabled services, including statistics on caseloads, ICF/ID residents per capita, and ICF/ID spending.

Ms. Bay provided an update ([Appendix F](#)) regarding the developmental disabilities (DD) system reimbursement project pursuant to North Dakota Century Code Section 50-06-37. She reviewed:

- The purpose and structure of the DD system reimbursement project steering committee.
- Current initiatives of the steering committee, including a supports intensity scale (SIS) update and an analysis of the relationship between the inventory for client and agency planning and SIS assessments.

In response to questions from committee members, Ms. Bay provided information relating to outlier summary data by service ([Appendix G](#)) and by person ([Appendix H](#)) for individuals receiving DD services.

Mr. Tim Eissinger, Chief Executive Officer, Anne Carlsen Center, expressed concern regarding the maximum on the funded percentage value for certain services provided by intermediate care facilities.

Ms. Borgi Beeler, President, Kalix, provided comments on the state's current SIS based system and support for elimination of audit settlements.

OTHER REPORTS

Ms. Bay provided information ([Appendix I](#)) regarding the impact, usage, and costs associated with the family caregiver service pilot project pursuant to Section 2 of Senate Bill No. 2276 (2023). She noted the requirements of the project and provided an implementation timeline with the pilot project beginning April 1, 2024.

Mr. Cory Pedersen, Child and Family Services Director, Department of Health and Human Services, provided information regarding the foster care and adoption child welfare redesign pursuant to Section 7 of Senate Bill No. 2080 (2023). He noted:

- The project's goal is to finalize adoptions for at least 80 percent of children that are available for adoption within 60 days. Current adoption wait time is over 12 months.
- The department will pay for background checks for adopting families.
- Providers will be included earlier in adoption process.
- Paperwork will be completed electronically within the case management system statewide.

Ms. Thomasson presented information ([Appendix J](#)) regarding the progress of the pay for success program pursuant to Section 1 of House Bill No. 1480 (2023). She noted the department has started developing the framework for potential projects and the process of finding potential partners.

STUDY OF FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CARE CENTERS

Mr. Dirk Wilke, Public Health Executive Director, Department of Health and Human Services, presented information ([Appendix K](#)) regarding federally qualified health care centers (FQHC). He reviewed:

- The funding distributions to the five FQHC within the state for year 1 of the biennium.
- The timeline for future funding distribution.

Mr. Patrick Gulbranson, Chief Executive Officer, Family HealthCare, provided information ([Appendix L](#)) regarding services provided by FQHC relating to funding provided by Senate Bill No. 2155 (2023). He noted the additional funding received by Family HealthCare has resulted in:

- The establishment of a primary medical care clinic in LaMoure.
- The recruitment and hiring of additional dental staff and a community health worker.
- Additional mobile unit operations.
- The expansion of women's health program with the hiring of an additional certified nurse midwife.
- Improved recruitment and retention of workforce for Family HealthCare.

GERIATRIC PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

Dr. Eduardo P. Yabut, Medical Director, State Hospital, Department of Health and Human Services, presented information ([Appendix M](#)) regarding geriatric psychiatric care availability across the state. He reviewed:

- Inpatient counts at the State Hospital for calendar year 2023.
- Census statistics relating to geriatric psychiatric services at the State Hospital.
- Guardianship concerns relating to discharge of patients.
- Specialized nursing care facilities providing geropsych services in the state.
- Concerns and recommendations relating to geropsych services documented in the 2022 Renee Schulte report.

In response to questions from committee members, Ms. Pamela Sagness, Executive Director, Behavioral Health Division, Department of Health and Human Services, provided statistics relating to services provided at the human service centers and comments regarding budget planning and cost-to-continue issues.

Ms. Shelly Peterson, President, North Dakota Long Term Care Association, provided information ([Appendix N](#)) regarding care and services in the state's geropsychiatric nursing facilities and discussed the need for more inpatient geropsych services. She noted:

- The number of geropsychiatric nursing facility beds is 68 statewide.
- Residents of geropsychiatric nursing facilities must be stable and without an acute mental health crisis.
- Statistics on occupancy and length of stay at the geropsychiatric nursing facilities.
- The need for geropsychiatric units for younger patients.

Mr. Travis Booke, Physician Assistant, CHI St. Alexius Health, Dickinson, provided information ([Appendix O](#)) regarding concerns relating to mental health issues affecting the geriatric population. He noted geriatric psychiatric patients have lengthy stays in emergency rooms due to limited facilities willing to accept them.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Committee members suggested the committee receive information regarding the following items at future meetings:

- A report from the National Conference of State Legislatures or the Council of State Governments regarding geriatric psychiatric care; and
- Core components of certified community behavioral health clinics.

No further business appearing, Chairman Ruby adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

Toby S. Mertz
Fiscal Analyst

ATTACH:15