

# NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

## Memorandum on Visitations

of the

### **BUDGET COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

Monday and Tuesday, September 22-23, 1997  
Southeast Human Service Center and  
Cass County Social Services  
Fargo, North Dakota

Senator Tim Mathern, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, September 22, 1997, at the Southeast Human Service Center, Fargo.

**Members present:** Senators Tim Mathern, Bill L. Bowman, Tom Fischer, Jerome Kelsh, Judy Lee, Rod St. Aubyn; Representatives Leonard J. Jacobs, Roxanne Jensen, Connie Johnsen, James A. Kerzman, Clara Sue Price, Ken Svedjan, Gerald O. Sveen, Janet Wentz

**Members absent:** Senator Russell T. Thane; Representative Wanda Rose

#### **SOUTHEAST HUMAN SERVICE CENTER BUDGET TOUR**

Mr. Douglas Seiler, Director, Southeast Human Service Center, provided the committee with a packet of information regarding the center's operations, and containing related agency testimony, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office. Mr. Seiler discussed the human service center goals and an overview of programs at the center.

Mr. Paul Elliott, Coordinator, Sexual Abuse Treatment Program, discussed the treatment program available for people in Region V and in Clay County, Minnesota. He said the program is available through the cooperative efforts of several area agencies, including the Southeast Human Service Center and Cass and Clay County Social Service and state's attorney agencies. He said the program focuses on sexual offenders who have abused children. He said individuals who have sexually abused adults or are in strong denial of their offenses are generally excluded.

Mr. Jim Gebhardt, Business Manager, Southeast Human Service Center, discussed the 1997-99 appropriation for the center. Mr. Gebhardt said the center's 1997-99 biennium budget, which totals \$16.7 million, has a \$603,000 budget shortfall. He said this is due to several factors, including \$357,000 relating to anticipated vacant positions and \$138,608 relating to a reduction in the social service block grant funds.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Gebhardt said the center opens

approximately 150 new cases each month and closes 100 existing cases.

Mr. Seiler discussed the mental health partnership grant, funded with federal funds that are scheduled to end in 1999. He said the human service center needs to convince other participants, including the school district and county social services, of the cost-effectiveness of providing the intensive case management to encourage their continued financial participation in the program.

Mr. Seiler discussed the program changes and programs being evaluated at the human service center. He said an evaluation of 249 extended care cases indicates that 94 percent of the participants decreased their number of hospital days following center intervention. He said the total number of hospital days for the 249 cases prior to intervention was 31,600 and was reduced to 11,074 days following intervention.

Mr. Seiler said the center has been working with Clay County, Minnesota, on an interstate compact to allow for the treatment of Minnesota residents at Fergus Falls rather than at the North Dakota State Hospital. He said the southeast outreach services have been expanded to put a larger number of clinicians in the field more often and on a more regular basis.

Mr. Michael Leier, Program Administrator, Extended Care Program, discussed the cooperative arrangement developed at the North Dakota State College of Science.

Mr. Clay Myers-Bowman, Flood Coordinator, Village Family Service Center, Fargo, presented an update regarding the impacts of the flood on the Fargo-Moorhead area.

In response to a question from Representative Svedjan, Mr. Seiler agreed to provide the committee with information regarding the estimated cost savings resulting from the reduction in admissions to the State Hospital from the Southeast Human Service Center.

Mr. Seiler said a concern of the southeast region is the demographics which reflect a strong economy and population growth. He said, however, the region's population growth without an increase in center staff has resulted in waiting lists for certain services. He

said historic funding patterns do not allow for increases due to population changes and increased demand for service. He said in addition as the economy grows it becomes more difficult to retain and

recruit staff. He said salary surveys in a strong economy must be current and done at least annually to be effective in competing for personnel.