

Testimony
Human Services Committee
Department of Human Services
Study of Guardianship Services & Models Proposed
Representative Alon Wieland, Chairman
August 30, 2012

Chairman Wieland and members of the Human Services Committee, I am Judy Vetter, Administrator of Guardian and Protective Services, Inc. I am here today to support and provide recommendations for consideration on the Study of Guardianship Services and the four models proposed as a result of the study conducted by Mr. Winsor C. Schmidt.

The study identified the unmet needs of our State for the populations in need of guardianship services that are not Developmentally Disabled (DD).

It is my recommendation that the current system of providing guardianship services to the Developmentally Disabled remain in place. This system works effectively and is set up to meet the specific needs of that population.

It is imperative that the unique differences in the service needs of the Traumatic Brain Injured, Severely Mentally Ill and Elderly be considered when decisions are being made in establishing a guardianship service delivery system for these individuals. None of these individuals have the same type of service delivery system that the Developmental Disabilities Division currently has in place.

It is my recommendation that due to the vast amount of information on the proposed four (4) service models of guardianship, that a committee (formed of guardianship providers for these populations, the State Court Administrator, the District Court, the North Dakota Association of Counties and other entities involved in establishing guardianships) take on the task of evaluating the proposed models and what the best fit for our State would be.

This committee would look at the pros and cons of each model as they relate to the needs of the populations and challenges facing us as a rural State referenced in the study. This committee would evaluate the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed models. It would formulate a recommendation using the four models proposed to meet the unmet needs for consideration in the next legislative session. The recommendation could be used to move our State forward in securing funding needed for guardianship services for all vulnerable individuals that are not Developmentally Disabled.

In closing, I would like to recommend that this Human Services Committee at the very least make a recommendation to allocate funds at a level consistent with the daily rate of reimbursement being proposed for guardianship services for the Developmentally Disabled. This funding would be used for the population with an unmet need for guardianship services identified in the Study.

Thank you for your time, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.