

Testimony
House Bill 1241 – Department of Human Services
House Human Services Committee
Representative Robin Weisz, Chairman
January 19, 2021

Chairman Weisz, members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Krista Fremming, Assistant Director of the Medical Services Division for the Department of Human Services (Department). I am here today to testify on House Bill 1241, which would require the Department to study the feasibility and desirability of implementing a nurse triage program for the Medicaid program during the 2021-22 interim and provide a report to legislative management.

The Department has developed a comprehensive quality strategy for the Medicaid program, to be implemented over the next few years. Part of the plan includes implementation of a Medicaid Health Homes program, which will coordinate care for Medicaid members with chronic health conditions. Health Homes are authorized in Section 1945 of the Social Security Act and allow states to receive a 90% federal match on all Health Home related activities for eight quarters. Primary care clinics that participate in the Health Homes program, and who meet certain quality benchmarks, will be eligible for a supplemental per member per month payment. The payment will vary by the level of intensity of the coordinated care that is needed by each enrolled member. In designing the Health Homes program the Department, along with stakeholders, can choose the list of chronic conditions to target. For reference, South Dakota's Health Homes program realized cost avoidance of \$7.3 million over the first five years of the program.

In regard to this bill, it is unknown how a nurse triage program would interact with a Health Homes program or if there would be duplication between the two programs. The Department also notes that for Medicaid expansion, our contracted managed care vendor is required to have a 24 hour nurse line.

The Department requests a fiscal note of \$60,000, all of which is general fund, be attached to this Bill, to cover the cost of a vendor to conduct this study.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions.