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## HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, August 29, 2023  
Roughrider Room, State Capitol  
Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Sean Cleary, Vice Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Members present:** Representatives Mike Beltz, Kathy Frelich, Dwight Kiefert, Alisa Mitskog, Brandon Prichard, Karen M. Rohr, Greg Stemen, Mary Schneider\*, Michelle Strinden; Senators Sean Cleary, Kyle Davison, Dick Dever, Kathy Hogan\*, Judy Lee, Kent Weston

**Members absent:** Representatives Matthew Ruby, Karen A. Anderson, Jayme Davis

**Others present:** Senator Tim Mathern, Fargo, member of the Legislative Management  
See [Appendix A](#) for additional persons present.

*\*Attended remotely*

At the request of Vice Chairman Cleary, Mr. Toby S. Mertz, Fiscal Analyst, Legislative Council, presented a memorandum entitled [Supplementary Rules of Operation and Procedure of the North Dakota Legislative Council](#).

### STUDY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF PREVIOUS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM STUDIES

At the request of Vice Chairman Cleary, Mr. Mertz presented a memorandum entitled [Study of the Implementation of Recommendations of the Human Services Research Institute's Study of the State's Behavioral Health System and Acute Psychiatric Hospitalization and Residential Care - Background Memorandum](#).

Ms. Pamela Sagness, Executive Director, Behavioral Health Division, Department of Health and Human Services, presented information ([Appendix B](#)) regarding the status of implementation of recommendations of the 2018 behavioral health system study and the 2022 acute psychiatric and residential needs study. She reviewed:

- Statewide statistics on behavioral health issues in the state, including substance abuse, mental illness, and suicide;
- The North Dakota Behavioral Health Plan Project dashboard, which is updated quarterly and provides progress on the current aims, goals, and objectives of the Human Services Research Institute's study;
- The timeline for addressing recommendations in the Renee Schulte Consulting, LLC, final report; and
- Department of Health and Human Services efforts to implement key state legislation, including creation of the opioid settlement fund and transitioning three human service centers to certified community behavioral health centers.

In response to a question from a committee member, Ms. Sagness noted that the department has funding in the department's budget to provide for a contract with the Human Services Research Institute for efforts to implement the recommendations of the study.

### STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN

At the request of Vice Chairman Cleary, Mr. Mertz presented a memorandum entitled [Study of Inpatient Mental Health Care for Children - Background Memorandum](#).

Ms. Sagness presented information ([Appendix C](#)) regarding inpatient mental health care for children in the state and the number and location of home- and community-based care and outpatient services providing children's mental health care. She reviewed:

- Differences between residential and inpatient mental health care.
- Implementation of the North Dakota System of Care grant which enhances community-based behavioral health services in the state.
- The behavioral health bed management system which provides bed census counts and bed availability, utilization, and capacity reporting.

In response to a question from a committee member, Mr. James Knopik, Adult Behavioral Health Administrator, Department of Health and Human Services, noted the behavioral health bed management system lacks the ability to identify providers with availability to accept acutely ill patients.

Ms. Kora Dockter, Executive Director, North Dakota Suicide Prevention Coalition, provided comments relating to potential options for children with mental health issues and their families to improve daily life functions.

Ms. Carlotta McCleary, Executive Director, North Dakota Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, provided comments ([Appendix D](#)) regarding mental health care for children. In response to a question from a committee member, Ms. McCleary noted the importance of Nexus-PATH therapeutic foster care for children.

### **STUDY OF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

At the request of Vice Chairman Cleary, Mr. Mertz presented a memorandum entitled [Study of Child Care Programs and Services - Background Memorandum](#).

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

- Statistics relating to child care as a workforce solution.
- Costs of child care statewide compared to household income.
- Implementation progress of child care programs provided for in House Bill No. 1540 (2023) and Senate Bill No. 2012 (2023).

In response to questions from committee members, Ms. Thomasson discussed the importance of the Early Childhood Services Advisory Board and the Early Childhood Council and noted strong interest from employers relating to the Working Parent Child Care Relief employer-led cost-share program.

Ms. Kay Larson, Director, Early Childhood Section, Department of Health and Human Services, distributed an update ([Appendix F](#)) pursuant to Section 56 of Senate Bill No. 2012 (2023), regarding the status of early childhood programs and services.

Ms. Andrea Pfennig, Director of Government Affairs, Greater North Dakota Chamber, provided comments regarding child care programs noting survey results on child care accessibility and benefits within businesses in the state.

### **STUDY OF PAYMENT RATES FOR INTERMEDIATE CARE FACILITIES**

At the request of Vice Chairman Cleary, Mr. Mertz presented a memorandum entitled [Study of Payment Rates for Intermediate Care Facilities - Background Memorandum](#).

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

- The number and location of intermediate care facilities throughout the state.
- Components included in the intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disability (ICF/ID) payment rate.
- The process used to establish the ICF/ID rate.

Mr. Tim Eissinger, Chief Executive Officer, Anne Carlsen Center, provided comments ([Appendix H](#)) regarding payment rates for the intermediate care facilities.

Ms. Borgi Beeler, President, Kalix, provided comments ([Appendix I](#)) regarding payment rates for intermediate care facilities.

### **STUDY OF EXPANSION OF FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CARE CENTERS**

At the request of Vice Chairman Cleary, Mr. Mertz presented a memorandum entitled [Study of Federally Qualified Health Centers Expansion - Background Memorandum](#).

Ms. Sarah Aker, Executive Director, Medical Services Division, Department of Health and Human Services, presented information ([Appendix J](#)) regarding the expansion of federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) in the state. She reviewed:

- Requirements of FQHCs.
- Locations and services provided by FQHCs in the state.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> year allocation of funding provided to FQHCs pursuant to Senate Bill No. 2055.

Ms. Shelly Ten Napel, Chief Executive Officer, Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas, provided comments ([Appendix K](#)) regarding the expansion of FQHCs in the state.

Ms. Mary Korsmo, Executive Director, North Dakota State Association of City and County Health Officials, provided comments regarding the expansion of FQHCs, relating to the cooperation between FQHCs and local public health units throughout the state.

### **OTHER COMMITTEE DUTIES**

At the request of Vice Chairman Cleary, Mr. Mertz presented a memorandum entitled [Other Duties of the Human Services Committee - Background Memorandum](#).

### **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

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

- Tax benefits available for businesses related to child care services;
- Desired outcomes and results for additional funding to FQHC providers; and
- Report from the National Conference of State Legislatures or the Council of State Governments regarding child care programs and innovations in other states.

No further business appearing, Vice Chairman Cleary adjourned the meeting at 3:25 p.m.

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Toby S. Mertz  
Fiscal Analyst

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