

FINAL REPORT

ASSURING EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF SOCIAL SERVICES INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE

JANUARY 1992

AUTHORIZATION AND APPOINTMENT

The Assuring Efficient Delivery of Social Services Interim Study Committee was established by the Legislative Council and directed to "Monitor the implementation of changes in social service delivery systems. Primary goals should be to maintain adequate delivery of services and document cost effectiveness of proposed changes. Topics to be monitored should include, but not be limited to, DHS district office restructuring and reorganization of Iowa's Mental Health Institutions."

Members of the Committee were:

Senator Elaine Szymoniak, Co-chairperson
Representative Joel Brown, Co-chairperson
Senator Leonard Boswell
Senator Mark Hagerla
Senator Beverly Hannon
Senator Dale Tieden
Representative Joan Hester
Representative Joyce Nielsen
Representative Don Shoning
Representative Matt Wissing
Ms. Naomi Craft, Decorah
Mr. John Erixon, Logan
Ms. Jean Oxley, Cedar Rapids

COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

The Study Committee was authorized two meeting days which were held on December 11, 1991, and January 6, 1992.

Meeting of December 11, 1991

The presentations and discussions of the meeting of December 11, 1991, are summarized as follows:

Ms. Sally Cunningham and Mr. Jim Krogman of the Department of Human Services (DHS) presented information regarding the DHS plan for the restructuring of field operations. Ms. Cunningham and Mr. Krogman reviewed the DHS plan, reviewed the circumstances which resulted in a lawsuit being brought by the Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) against the DHS, reviewed the proceedings to date, and provided information regarding the issues on which consensus had and had not been reached by the transition committee that was formed to address the differences between DHS and ISAC in restructuring. A copy of the materials presented by DHS, including the proposed restructuring plan, are on file with the Legislative Service Bureau.

Ms. Wendy Burgess, Iowa State Association of Counties, presented information regarding the circumstances surrounding the legislation mandating the restructuring of DHS field operations, the proceedings to date, and the alternative plan provided by ISAC for field restructuring.

Mr. Steve Siegel, a social worker in Ottumwa, discussed the problems facing DHS field staff. Mr. Siegel recommended that caseloads should be more equitably distributed, that regional offices are unnecessary and services could be provided from cluster offices, that private contracting with workers should not be encouraged due to higher costs and a lower worker-to-client ratio, and that the foster care system should be reviewed.

Mr. Mike Madigan, who represents 1,300 DHS caseworkers for Iowa United Professionals (IUP), provided information regarding the problems resulting from a reduction in field staff and an increase in caseloads. Mr. Madigan recommended retaining the current field operations structure and increasing the number of field staff. He stated, however, that since the restructuring is proceeding he would approve the cluster concept, self-determination for county selection of the area cluster in which a county would participate, and the field staff-to-supervisor ratio of one-to-nine.

Mr. Gary Kuehnast, Chairperson of the County Transition Committee, discussed the unresolved differences between the ISAC and DHS plans. He identified two areas of concern in his summary of the differences remaining between DHS and ISAC, which are the cost shifts to the counties, and the plan by DHS to use five regional offices for administration as opposed to the ISAC proposal for one central service center for administration.

Ms. Vickie L. Johnson, Administrator of the Clarke County Homemaker-Home Health Aide Service, spoke in opposition to the DHS restructuring plan noting problems with the lack of a full-time presence in providing services to clients. Materials from the Clarke County Public Health Agency, which also opposes the DHS proposal, were provided by Ms. Johnson and are on file in the Legislative Service Bureau.

Meeting of January 6, 1992

During the second meeting of the Study Committee, the Study Committee addressed the issue of the reconfiguration of the state Mental Health Institutes (MHIs). A summary of the presentations, discussion, and recommendations of the January 6, 1992, meeting is as follows:

Mr. John Fairweather and Mr. Harold Templeman, Department of Human Services, presented information regarding the reconfiguration of the state Mental Health Institutes. Materials that Mr. Templeman provided to the Study Committee regarding the reconfiguration are on file in the Legislative Service Bureau. Mr. Templeman recounted the circumstances leading to the reconfiguration of the MHIs. Mr. Templeman also discussed the issue of detoxification and the MHI policy to not provide such a service at MHIs.

Ms. Wendy Burgess, Iowa State Association of Counties, and Mr. Michael Riepe, County Attorney for Henry County, provided information in opposition to the DHS reconfiguration plan, including the lack of detoxification services, the increased travel involved for clients receiving services due to the reconfiguration, and the increased per diem costs in relying on private institutions to provide care when an MHI is not available.

Ms. Judy Dierenfeld, Community Mental Health Centers Association of Iowa, presented information which focuses on the need for community-based services and the reliance of clients on community-based services. She stressed that community-based services are not mandated and that due to increased expenses to counties, the counties could choose to not fund such services. She noted the need for a supplemental appropriation by March 1, 1992, to provide adequate funding for the continuation of community-based services and the need to provide funding in order to retain professional staff, such as psychiatrists.

Mr. Gene Smail, President, Iowa Coalition, related his personal experience with mental health services and recommended that the state close the MHIs at Mount Pleasant and Clarinda and invest the savings in rehabilitation services through the Medicaid program.

Ms. Jan Grimm, a member of the Mount Pleasant MHI staff, related her opposition to the reconfiguration plan and the need for full-service MHIs. She also commented on her belief that the mentally ill have rights including the right to receive the best possible services in the least restrictive environment.

Ms. Margaret Stout, Executive Director, Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Iowa, Inc., provided the Study Committee with recommendations regarding the provision of mental health services including utilizing inpatient beds at local community hospitals or health centers, providing services in Iowa to Iowa children who are currently receiving services outside of the state, and providing employment to clients and increasing rehabilitation and housing options.

Ms. Sally Cunningham, DHS, provided the Study Committee with an update on the DHS field operations restructuring plan. She reported that the Iowa Supreme Court had upheld the lower court's ruling that DHS could proceed with the restructuring plan and include the counties in the transition phase. She noted, however, that the Court's decision also upheld the interpretation of the language regarding the Des Moines office which indicated that the office cannot be closed. Ms. Cunningham recommended amendment of the language to allow DHS to proceed with the reconstruction plan so as to allow DHS to reclassify the Des Moines office as one of the proposed regional offices.

Mr. Gary Kuehnast, Chairperson, County Transition Committee for reorganization of field operations, indicated that the main disagreement remaining between the DHS proposal and the ISAC proposal for reorganization is the structure of the organization above the cluster level. He recommended that the General Assembly consider the ISAC proposal as a basis for reorganization, that any legislation drafted in the future specify the structure to be utilized, that the General Assembly appropriate sufficient funding for line staff and decrease caseweights for line staff, and that DHS be allowed to fill vacancies of funded FTE positions without the sanction of the Department of Management.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Study Committee made the following recommendations:

1. That corrective language be drafted to eliminate the DHS Des Moines district office to provide consistency.
2. That all aspects of detoxification be reviewed, including the costs of detoxification and funding responsibilities.
3. That the responsibility of the state institutions, whether a client is under a court-ordered placement in an MHI or a voluntary

commitment, be clarified. The review should include but not be limited to procedures currently in place for admissions and placements, the consequences if an MHI does not have beds available, and the fiscal impact resulting from the determinations.

4. That the Committee does not recommend closing MHIs as a means of deficit reduction.
5. That a state plan providing for a continuum of services be implemented and that the plan be developed through input from all interested segments of the communities in the state.
6. That any savings that have been captured by the state by downsizing any of the MHIs should not revert to the general fund of the state but should be used to develop affordable community-based services.

COMMITTEE REQUESTS

Senator Hannon requested that the Legislative Fiscal Bureau review the DHS reconfiguration plan for the MHIs and provide a fiscal analysis of the moneys actually saved compared with the moneys recouped from private insurers, the counties, and the federal government. A copy of the fiscal analysis is on file with the Legislative Service Bureau.

Senator Hagerla requested that the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics review policies regarding the training of psychiatrists and family practitioners in order to develop an incentive plan for training and retaining these professionals in the state. Senator Hannon suggested that this review might be within the purview of the Joint Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

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