



# STATE OF IOWA

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
MARY MINCER HANSEN, RN, PhD  
DIRECTOR

September 4, 2003

Members of the Legislative Oversight Committee  
State Capitol  
Des Moines, IA

Dear Senators and Representatives,

Enclosed you will find a preliminary report on the collaboration of programs between the Department of Human Services and the Department of Public Health. During the 2002 Interim, the Program Elimination Commission briefly discussed the possibility of merging our two agencies. During the 2003 Legislative session proposed legislation in SF 261 directed the Departments to study merging the two agencies. SF 261 was not adopted, but in the spirit of the legislation we agreed to evaluate programs using our staff resources and develop a plan for collaborative services. (See attached letter)

Included with the report, is information helpful to understanding the assumptions that went into its creation. Section one starts with a document prepared for the Program Elimination Commission by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau identifying possible areas of overlap between our agencies. Section two identifies areas where we already see successful collaboration and areas that have been identified through further, joint review of our programs that we could better collaborate in the future.

We would like to reiterate to the members of the Committee that we do not view a merger of our two agencies as the most effective stewardship of the state's resources. Each of our agencies plays an important, yet distinct role in the health and welfare of Iowans. There are many examples of collaboration and opportunities to expand our working relationship to better serve the citizens of this state, however, we believe further pursuit of the merger of our two agencies at this time may likely detract from other essential priorities.

Thank you for this opportunity. During the course of this evaluation we were able to identify several additional areas where we could expand our cooperation to better serve the needs of Iowans. We look forward to discussing this with you further.

Sincerely,

Kevin W. Concannon, Director  
Department of Human Services

Dr. Mary Hansen, Director  
Department of Public Health