

MINUTES OF THE
JOINT HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES APPROPRIATION SUBCOMMITTEE
Friday, February 7, 2003, 2:00 p.m.
Room 131 State Capitol

Members Present: Sen. David H. Steele, Committee Co-Chair
Rep. Jack A. Seitz, Committee Co-Chair
Sen. Paula Julander
Rep. J. Stuart Adams
Rep. Calvin G. Bird
Rep. David Litvack
Rep. Rebecca Lockhart
Rep. Roz McGee
Rep. Mike Thompson

Members Excused: Sen. Leonard Blackham

Staff Present: Spencer C. Pratt, Legislative Fiscal Analyst
Thor Nilsen, Legislative Fiscal Analyst
Norda Shepard, Secretary

Public Speakers Present: Sen. Peter C. Knudson
Carmen Pingree
Lisa Bean
Dr. William McMahon, Autism Research Physician, University of Utah
Julia Pearce, Co-Chair, Legislative Coalition of People with Disabilities
Joanna Harris
Kenneth Anderson
Judi Hillman, Health Care Advocate, Utah Issues
Dr. Peter Nicholas, Director, Pingree School
Heidi Nielson
Shauna O'Neil, Executive Director, Salt Lake County Aging Services
Rep. Kory M. Holdaway
Mike Richardson, Work Force Services
Patricia Worthington, Director, Foster Care Citizen Review Board
Kay Foss, Salt Lake Community Action Program
Mandy Janis, Crossroads Center
Kay Waite, Associate Director, Association for Utah Community Health
Kathy Froerer, Executive Director, Local Health Officers Association
Robin Arnold-Williams, Executive Director, Department of Human Services
Kris Fawson, Director, Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities

List of Visitors on File

Meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Steele at 2:06 p.m.

A booklet entitled "Compilation of Appropriations Subcommittees 2% Cut List" was distributed by Steve Jardine from the Governor's Office of Budget and Planning.

Co-Chair Steele stated that this has been an anxious, difficult time for everyone. He said he would like to emphasize that the very real human impact of what is happening be considered. He stated that since the committee last met in December budgets have been trimmed \$18 million plus in general funds for the Department of Human Services and \$12 million from the Department of Health for FY 2004. He stated the Departments are struggling with the magnitude of these cuts, as well as the day to day providers and those who received these services. He said the meeting today will focus on the summary of the priority lists turned in by committee members and discussion on mini-appropriation bills. He stated budgets will be discussed and some input from individuals will be taken as time allows, recognizing that the committee has had a lot of input, which has been welcome and appreciated. He stated he wanted to emphasize that actions taken here are not the finalized budget.

MOTION: Rep. Adams moved to approve the minutes of 2-03-03. The motion passed unanimously.

Handouts were distributed for both the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services with rankings of those items that could most likely be reduced, with #1 as the most comfortable item to be reduced and the higher the number the less inclination to reduce.

Sen. Peter C. Knudson said he wished to speak about a very critical health issue. He said he realized cuts have been made in a lot of areas but one cut that has distressed him is the cut to children's dental health care. He said he believes that eliminating the dental care for the CHIPs program is counterproductive to the goals set in terms of providing health care to those who have difficulty accessing health care. He stated dental health is critical to young people. He said more school days are lost in elementary school due to dental health problems than any other measure and more children are hospitalized for dental problems than they are for medical problems. He stated that there are no savings when dental care is cut because you are only adding new costs at a different level. He urged that as the committee struggles with these budgets that consideration be given to this serious issue.

Carmen Pingree expressed appreciation for the opportunity for a few parents and others to talk about the importance of the pre-school services for children with autism. She explained that in 1979 her family struggled to find a diagnosis for her son. It was discovered that he was autistic. She said they found there were only two or three slots for children with autism in any kind of pre-school program. She said her research at that time showed that 95% of children with autism ended up as adults in institutions. She asked the parents present to display pictures of their children. She explained these parents wanted the committee to hear the human side of the autism story.

Lisa Bean stated her daughter was on a waiting list for over a year for the autism pre-school. She said her daughter had no speech, she was prone to long tantrums, was unable to be toilet trained, and she had no fear, making it difficult for the entire family. After she was admitted to the pre-school and received the training, her language improved, the tantrums stopped and family stress decreased. She was in the program two years and was able to be mainstreamed by the time she started kindergarten. She is now in sixth grade, can work independently, is a straight A student, plays the cello, has friends, and is thriving because of this early intervention. She said she strongly recommended that funding not be cut for the pre-school programs.

Dr. William McMahon, Research Physician, University of Utah, stated he has been involved with autism and autism research since 1977. He is doing research on the cause of autism, but stated he was not here to talk about the causes. He said that he is here to state that the only intervention that works is early invention in a structured setting. He said that autism's defining feature is the inability of a child to socially interact with parents and others. He said it can be changed with early intervention. He stated that early treatment can make a significant difference and can give many children the hope of a normal adult life. He stated that one of the best outcome predictors is did the child have intervention before age 5.

Julia Pearce, Co-Chair, Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities, stated she would like to speak about the non-waiver services that are recommended to be cut. She said these involve people who are already receiving services and they are concerned about where they will get the support if they are cut.

Joanna Harris stated she has two children in the autism program and without the services this program provides, her children would not be able to do a lot of the things they are able to do. She stated the program is such a great benefit to these autistic children. She said if anything, more money is needed, not less. She said the early behavior training gives them the skills they need to survive.

Kenneth Anderson stated he was speaking on behalf of his two autistic granddaughters because his daughter could not be here. He said he would testify that early intervention does help. He stated it assists them in getting direction and focus. He said autistic children need focus and they need the early intervention provided by this schooling.

Juli Hillman, Health Care Advocate, Utah Issues, stated she is concerned about the proposed additional 2% cuts. She said it is time for everyone to have a long overdue discussion about the state's values. She said some programs are not critical to human life. She stated we need to be creative to preserve some of these critical programs.

Dr. Peter Nicholas, Director Autism Program, Pingree School, explained that one of the very first thing a child learns in the autism pre-school is how to attend. He said that by "attending" he means sitting down with hands and feet down and making eye contact. He said without those skills, which autism children do not have, there are hundred of problems. He described how these children are taught these basic skills in a very intensive, repetitive, step by step process. Once "attending" is accomplish, other skills are added, such as following directions, communication, imitation, all which are called "learning to learn" skills. He stated this training is very time intensive. He said all other learning is based on these skills learned at a young age. He displayed a language book that is used in the training.

Heidi Nielson stated she wanted to express how intensified the program needs to be for these children and with an intensified program comes the cost. She said that in addition to the dollars the state puts into this program, there are many more dollars that parents have to spend for these children. She said she pays between \$6,000 and \$10,000 a year for speech therapy that insurance does not cover. She stated these pre-school programs are a little bit of relief for these parents who face a life time of cost.

Shauna O'Neil, Executive Director, Salt Lake County Aging Services, stated she has been moved by the parents who struggle to care for their children. She said these parents, as well as those who care for older people, are part of families who have lots of needs. She told of her personal experience of her family caring for her grandmother. She stated that aging services give meals, give baths, gives small things that allows those families to remain involved in caring for their older loved ones. She said that the impact of some of the 2% cuts will mean that some senior centers will no longer be able to function full time or even stay open at all. She states that aging services is one of the least expensive services that the state provides and has the greatest payback.

Rep. Kory Holdaway spoke about H.B. 212 Primary Care Network Amendments for General Assistance Recipients which has to do with the general assistance population. He explained the bill has a fiscal note of \$90,000, \$45,000 state and \$45,000 federal. Mike Richardson, Work force Services, explained that those who qualify for general assistance are those who have either had an accident or have a problem that makes them ineligible to work. They need assistance to survive until they can be employed, either through solving their problem or getting on social security long term disability. He said it is for people who have no ability to earn income during a short period of time. Rep. Holdaway said this bill is desperately needed by about 1500 people in the state.

Patricia Worthington, Director, Foster Care Citizens Review Board, said she wanted to let the committee know about their program. She said during the past 10 years they have grown from 44 volunteers on 4 boards in only three communities in the state to 46 boards and 442 volunteers. She indicated that their program is an excellent example of a public/private partnership. She showed a pie chart that indicated the source of the funding, the state funds being 39%, the other in federal funding and the value of volunteer services.

Kay Foss, Salt Lake Community Action Program said she wanted to address the impact of taking 104 of the 290 people who are on non-waiver services under DSPD and removing all of their in-home services. She stated that much has been said about nursing home care being so much more expensive and gives so much less dignity than

when someone can stay at home. She said to allow people to stay in their own homes with dignity and being able to volunteer in their communities is so important. She urged the subcommittee again to consider that savings this year will end up in the Medicaid budget later as higher costs.

Mandy Janis from Crossroads Urban Center said she wanted to support Rep. Holdaway's bill. She said the Crossroads Center has been supporting people along the Wasatch Front by helping provide the PCN involvement fee for people where \$50 created a hardship. She indicated that over the last week the funds available for this have run out. She said any financial assistant in helping to fund this \$45,000 for the fiscal bill would be well spent.

Kay Waite, Utah Association of Community Health, spoke as an advocate of the community, migrant, and homeless health care centers in Utah and the 59,000 patients that they served in 2001. She asked support for the State Primary Care Grants program as it is a valuable program. She said she would also like to ask support for the Utah Health Care Workforce Assistance Program. She stated that community health centers across the state in under served communities rely on this program to help recruit and retain medical providers. Without this assistance, providers are unable to serve in these communities.

Kathy Froerer, Executive Director, Local Health Officers Association, said she wanted to remind the committee that much of the work done at the local level is in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Quality so the cuts proposed on the list today are only part of the cuts that local health departments will experience this year. She indicated local health departments are mandated to do many things that protect the public health and the ability to do that is eroded by the fact that they have had level funding over the past decade. The dramatic increasing population has also greatly affected the ability to help many of the people who come for help.

Committee discussion was held on considering finding additional sources of funding, birth certificate fee increases, eliminating of some services that are not life threatening, and the possibility of selling land at the Developmental Center. Robin Arnold-Williams, Executive Director, Department of Human Resources, distributed a handout concerning this property. She stated that no buyers have approached them and this briefing paper was the best information available at this time in terms of description, the amount of land, and the estimated value of the property.

Co-Chair Steele indicated the co-chairs will continue to share the messages they have heard with the Executive Appropriations Committee and will be as articulate as can be to the real life situations going on. He said he feels it is to the state's advantage to clearly recognize some of the needs of these programs and the impact of the cuts that have been made. He stated he feels the men and women of the Legislature are committed to doing what they think is right. They are trying and do care.

Kris Fawson, Director, Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities, said she would like to thank the co-chairs and the members of the committee for being so committed and understanding to the needs of the people.

MOTION: Rep. Adams moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Steele adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Minutes reported by Norda Shepard, Secretary.

Sen. David H. Steele
Committee Co-Chair

Rep. Jack A. Seitz
Committee Co-Chair

