

HJR 16: State-Operated Institutions

Increasing Crisis Response for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

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for the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee
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Background

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) has created a team of people who work with local providers and families to stabilize developmentally disabled individuals who are in or approaching a crisis situation. The effort is designed to keep people in the community and avoid placement in a higher level of care, including the Montana Developmental Center in Boulder. The team consists of five crisis and transition specialists supported by a psychiatrist who consults with the Developmental Disabilities Program one day a week.

In March, the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee asked staff to estimate the costs of increasing the number of crisis response teams. This briefing paper outlines potential costs.

Current Costs of Services

DPHHS expects to spend about \$374,000 in this fiscal year for the six-member crisis response team, including \$77,200 for the contract with the psychiatrist. The bulk of the remaining cost is for salaries and benefits for the five employees who travel around Montana to work with providers and clients.

The amount includes only three months of salary for one of the employees, so costs for a full six-member team for a full year would be higher.

Expansion Options and Potential Costs

The costs of increasing the staff for mobile crisis response would depend largely on the number of new employees and the salaries they're paid.

Adding five employees would double the size of the staff and allow team members to focus on separate halves of the state. Adding more than five employees would allow DPHHS to split the state into smaller regions for crisis response.

The state uses a pay scale that groups jobs into nine "bands" for the purposes of establishing salaries. Jobs in higher bands require a higher level of education and experience, and the salaries for those jobs are higher than salaries for lower pay bands. The crisis response employees now on staff have master's degrees, which would place them in at least Pay Band 6.

The table on the following page shows the potential costs of adding five, 10, or 15 staff members at that pay band. Costs were calculated by:

- using the average hourly rate paid to DPHHS employees who are in Pay Band 6;

- using the salary, health insurance, and benefit costs expected in FY 2015, when executive branch employees are scheduled to receive a 5 percent pay raise and health insurance costs are expected to increase above the FY 2014 levels;
- including the current year "standard office package" of \$3,042 for each employee; and
- assuming that none of the employees would have supervisory duties and that the level of contract psychiatric support would not change.

	Number of Employees		
	Five	Ten	Fifteen
Salary	\$235,976	\$471,952	\$707,928
Health Insurance	\$53,220	\$106,440	\$159,660
Other Benefits	\$37,756	\$75,512	\$113,268
Office Package	\$15,210	\$30,420	\$45,630
Total	\$342,162	\$684,324	\$973,266

Costs could vary if any of the assumptions above changed or if the 2015 Legislature increases pay or benefit levels for the next biennium.

Committee Decision Points

If the committee wants to support an increased level of mobile crisis response in the developmental disabilities system, members may want to consider and decide the following questions.

1. Should the committee draft legislation to appropriate money for additional crisis response employees?
 - a. How many employees does the committee feel are necessary to provide for an improved crisis response?
2. Alternatively, should the committee encourage the governor to include money in the executive budget for an expansion of the existing crisis response team? If so, does the committee want to:
 - a. make a recommendation on the number of additional employees needed to provide for an improved crisis response?
 - b. encourage members of the House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance and Claims Committee to support any request by the executive branch for additional crisis response employees?

Next Steps

If the committee decides to request a bill draft, the draft bill would be presented to the committee for review and public comment at the June 20 meeting.

If the committee decides to encourage the governor or the 2015 budget committees to include an appropriation in the executive budget, staff would draft a letter for review and approval by either the presiding officer or the full committee.