

John Desch -Human Services Standing Committee- 3 PM 1/19/15

Policy or practices changes- Some solution suggestions.

#### Solution 1

Require verification of the living situation indicated on the application. Allow for Facebook, Twitter, or any other public media posts to be used as verification for the application or review. Require some sort of statement from a landlord stating not only the rent amount but who lives there. Change the present form we now use to provide more information.

#### Solution 2

Liquid asset limits for SNAP. The decision to rescind resource limits for SNAP was a mistake. There is no reason someone with \$5000 or more in a checking or savings account cannot purchase their own food. I do believe it is appropriate to exclude from consideration less liquid assets such as vehicles, snowmobiles, campers, trailers, boats and anything licensed by the motor vehicle department. Some people actually live in their vehicles for a time. When the mill in our town closed there were a lot of people who had accumulated a lot of the extra vehicles they could afford. They were trapped with these and no funds to purchase necessities. I don't feel that all assets should be exempt from consideration; a new policy needs to be established to count savings, cash and checking.

#### Solution 3

Provide an incentive to clients to file required paperwork on time. A penalty period for failure to comply, such as no expedited criteria once you've closed for failure to submit required forms/verifications for SNAP. It is difficult to meet the current requirement that the household again has benefits within 7 DAYS. Sometimes it is next to impossible to do so in the same day, which is the service first program's push. Whatever the remedy, it seems wrong to reward folks for acting irresponsibly and further stress an already overworked staff. Some sort of wait period for not returning your Simplified report on time would also be appropriate, or maybe just scrap this report because they can reapply and get signed up again right away.

#### Resolution 4

Tanf- Perhaps recipients should be required to complete some work under the WORC program before receiving the full month's pay. After many TANF applications are authorized, the client fails to complete the agreed upon activities and are sanctioned. In other words they get their money and fail to show up for work again. In the real world, people perform a job before receiving pay. I understand that many are destitute, so maybe a partial month's grant could be awarded and the rest after they comply with certain requirements. Maybe we could authorize weekly payments or twice a month the way unemployment pays. This would assure a better participation rate in the program.

#### Resolution 5

Require applicants to submit tax returns to verify income for maybe all programs.

#### Resolution 6-7

For TANF we require the applicant to complete child support referrals. Even if they maintain that they don't know who the absent parent is, we require completed support forms on all possibilities. In this case, a high majority of the time the Child Support Enforcement Division can establish paternity.

Pregnant Woman Medicaid: Go back to requiring proof of pregnancy, which may not be allowed under ACA rules. This is an opened ended invitation for fraud. I have had cases already that the woman claimed she was pregnant, and disappeared after six months or finally reported she had a lost the baby. Some had never even seen a doctor. In Washington, the state would try to recover costs if the client or clients ever showed up having income. Many women would move to Montana to have their baby and then move back later. Child support papers should be required on all of these cases again

These suggestions may or may not be feasible based on federal or state laws, but they should be at least considered. The most important problem is that we are getting further away from verifications and leaning more toward providing benefits solely based on client statement. Many people will say whatever they can to get benefits or continue to be receiving benefits at the same level. It would be wrong to allow Medicaid Expansion before we address current issues that allow applicants to receive benefits while they continue to be irresponsible or maybe dishonest. Chimes EA needs to be fixed and there needs to be more personnel to expand Medicaid. Washington has a whole separate unit to handle ACA Medicaid.

Consider, what is required for most bank loans that are applied for, they require much more verification than Public Assistance and we are giving away benefits without repayment.