

HOUSE BILL NO. 305

INTRODUCED BY K. DUDIK

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO TAKE CERTAIN ACTIONS TO IMPROVE SERVICES TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT; REQUIRING REPORTS; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Duties of department -- staffing -- additional services -- reports.** The

department shall:

- (1) obtain from a national independent accreditation entity an estimate of the cost of achieving accreditation for child and family services and an initial accreditation assessment of child and family services provided by the department;
- (2) establish caseload standards for child welfare and licensing employees and maintain staffing levels that meet national standards;
- (3) fund family preservation services, parent-child visitation services, foster care services, and postpermanency support services;
- (4) examine and, where appropriate, restructure rates in order to incentivize interventions and services that are proven effective in preventing and treating child abuse and neglect;
- (5) coordinate with county health departments to establish and maintain high-quality, in-home partnerships between public health nurses and families;
- (6) implement an electronic records management system and an integrated, automated case management system in order to:
  - (a) ensure that information is available statewide;
  - (b) enhance protections for children; and
  - (c) protect the privacy rights of persons whose information is part of the child welfare system case records;
- (7) report annually to the governor and attorney general and biennially to the legislature. The report must



1 provide information regarding:

2 (a) the department's compliance with this section; and

3 (b) the safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families served by the child welfare  
4 system.

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6 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Appropriation -- authorization.** (1) There is appropriated \$3 million from  
7 the general fund to the department of public health and human services for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015,  
8 and there is appropriated \$1.35 million in federal spending authority for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015.

9 (2) The appropriation must be used to pay for the purposes established in [section 1].

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11 **NEW SECTION. Section 3. Legislative intent.** The total amount of general fund expenditures made  
12 in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015, for the purposes provided in [section 1(2), (3), and (5)] may be:

13 (1) included in the proposed base budget for the 2019 biennium; and

14 (2) considered ongoing and included in the base budget proposed by the executive in future bienniums.

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16 **NEW SECTION. Section 4. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an  
17 integral part of Title 52, chapter 2, part 1, and the provisions of Title 52, chapter 2, part 1, apply to [section 1].

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19 **NEW SECTION. Section 5. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2015.

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