

HJR 39: Community Services for Developmentally Disabled

Draft Study Plan

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for June 2, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Montana, as a state, adopted a policy in the mid-1970s of moving people with mental illnesses and with developmental disabilities out of state institutions and into community settings. As a result, hundreds of people who once would have lived at the Montana Developmental Center in Boulder and the Montana State Hospital in Warm Springs are now living in cities and towns across the state, with varying degrees of assistance.

However, waiting lists still exist for some community services. And some developmentally disabled individuals who also have a mental illness may act out in ways that result in contact with the justice system and, for some, incarceration.

House Joint Resolution 39 proposes to study the development of additional community services for developmentally disabled children and adults with mental illness and identify any issues that have limited the creation of services for those individuals.

Legislators ranked the study 13th in the post-session poll of interim studies. Staff recommended to the Legislative Council that the study be conducted at the staff level and the findings presented to the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee in a white paper. The Council approved that proposal at its May 27, 2009, meeting.

STUDY RESOURCES

Staff will tap a variety of resources to complete the study, including:

- the Disability Services Division of the Department of Public Health and Human Services;
- Montana Developmental Center staff;
- Department of Corrections staff, particularly the staff member assigned to liaison with DPHHS on issues related to mental illness;
- associations representing DD providers, advocates for the developmentally disabled and people with mental illnesses, and law enforcement; and
- individual DD providers as needed.

OUTLINE OF STUDY ACTIVITIES

The study will include the following activities during the time periods noted:

1. **Collection of information and stakeholder comment: June 2009-January 2010.** Staff will meet with the state agencies that provide services to developmentally disabled individuals and with other stakeholders to determine:
 - ▶ the community services that currently exist;
 - ▶ services that may be useful but are lacking at this time;
 - ▶ whether certain areas of the state lack services to a greater degree than other areas and, if so, how communities in those areas could address the lack of services;
 - ▶ how individuals are identified to receive services;
 - ▶ provider willingness to serve the identified population; and
 - ▶ estimated costs of providing additional services and related considerations.

Staff will contact stakeholders individually as needed and may arrange one or more meetings of interested parties to brainstorm ideas.
2. **Draft white paper: January-March 2010.** Staff will analyze the information collected and draft a white paper for presentation to the Committee in March. *Committee role: Review white paper during the March 2010 meeting and provide direction on further action desired, if any.*
3. **Committee review of any additional materials requested: May-August 2010.** Staff will compile for the committee's final meetings any additional materials requested by the committee. *Committee role: Review additional materials and provide direction at May and/or June 2010 meetings. Final action on any requested materials at August 2010 meeting.*

Action Item: *Review, discuss, and adopt or revise the proposed study activities.*

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