

Unofficial Draft Copy

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LCCF08

**** Bill No. ****

Introduced By *****

By Request of the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services
Interim Committee

A Bill for an Act entitled: "An Act requiring the department of public health and human services to use existing funding to appoint a department employee to assist with consumer affairs issues within the department; requiring the department to provide certain services for consumers of department programs."

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Montana:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Creation of position for consumer affairs and interdivisional issues -- Department duties regarding consumer issues.

(1) The department of public health and human services shall use existing funding to create and maintain at least one full-time equivalent position for the purpose of

(a) responding to consumer questions about services or public benefits available in programs administered by the department;

(b) coordinating between divisions of the department responses to consumers questions about services or public benefits available in programs administered by the department; and

(c) other duties as assigned by the director of the department or the director's designee.

(2) In carrying out responsibilities pursuant to subsection (1) (a) or (1) (b), the person appointed pursuant to subsection (1) shall:

(a) coordinate the department response with appropriate divisions of the department's headquarters and any local department office in the area in which the issue arose; and

(b) gather appropriate information and provide the information directly to the consumer.

(3) In order to respond to questions from the public about benefits available as part of programs administered by the department, the department shall:

(a) provide, as part of its internet-based information on department programs, a method by which members of the public can communicate with and request information from an individual appointed pursuant to subsection (1); and

(b) establish and maintain a toll-free telephone line which must be available for the same purposes as the internet-based service required by subsection (2) (a).

(4) If the department denies to any person a benefit or service available to the public or a part of the public, the department shall provide to the applicant for the service or benefit a written denial of the benefit or service applied for and, as part of the written denial, must include the name and telephone number of a department employee at the local and state level with whom the reason for the denial may be discussed. The department must also, as part of the denial, state any method by which the decision of the department may be appealed or reviewed.

NEW SECTION. **Section 2. {standard} Codification**

instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 50, and the provisions of Title 50 apply to [section 1].

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