



Senate Standing Committee on Judiciary

February 10, 2015

Testimony on:

ERO No. 43

Written testimony by:

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Topeka, Kansas

Testimony on:

Executive Reorganization Order No. 43

Chairman King, Vice Chair Smith, Ranking Minority Member Haley and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) believes that strong families make a strong Kansas. DCF's mission is to protect children, promote healthy families and encourage personal responsibility. In an ongoing effort to further our mission, we request your support of the Governor's Executive Reorganization Order (ERO) No. 43, signed Jan. 16, 2015, which transfers Medicaid responsibilities pertaining to the elderly and disabled populations to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), and moves all licensing, regulation and oversight duties of the following to DCF:

- Family Foster Homes (2,673)
- Child Placing Agencies (50) including: 24 Adoption Child Placing Agencies, 15 Foster Care Placing Agencies, 11 Child Placing Agencies
- Residential Centers (36)
- Approved Family Foster Homes (32) (i.e. military base, relative, youth 16 and older)
- Group Boarding Homes (24)
- Detention Center (11)
- Attendant Care (4)
- State Children's Institutions (4)
- Secure Care Centers (1)
- Staff Secure Facility (1) (Created by new human trafficking legislation)

Need for ERO

This transition from KDHE of licensure of facilities that provide placement options for children in the care of the Secretary of DCF will be a joint effort between the two agencies to create greater efficiencies, oversight and accountability.

Transition Plans

Beginning July 1, 2016, DCF will have all foster care-related services under its umbrella. Medicaid eligibility workers will transition to KDHE Jan. 1, 2016.

Transition teams for both foster care and Medicaid are now being created to make plans for this change and to identify and address issues, such as staffing needs.

Although Kansas has a privatized child welfare system, served by two contractors, licensing functions will be established to prevent any perceived conflict of interest. DCF

is committed to keeping children safe. It is in no one's best interest to license unsafe foster homes.

Details regarding group homes will be agreed upon by KDHE and DCF during transition discussions in the coming months. In the absence of a negotiated agreement, the Governor will decide the outcome.

Foster Care Transfer

As of September 4, 2014, our licensed foster homes in Kansas had the capacity to provide out of home placements for 7,182 children.

Transferring foster care licensure to DCF is in line with the core functions of the agency. DCF is responsible for the child welfare services in Kansas. Bringing foster care licensure into the agency will enhance DCF's ability to holistically care for children removed from their homes. Additionally, by bringing foster care licensure to DCF, the process will be streamlined and further the agency's ability to monitor the entire foster care system. It is DCF's desire to build a cohesive system that best serves children in need of care, their families and our foster parents.

Medicaid Transfer

DCF currently determines eligibility for approximately 26 percent of the medical determinations for older adults, persons with disabilities and youth in foster care (111,214 of the total 443,912 beneficiaries). KDHE completes the determination for the remaining 74 percent. The ERO will transfer all but foster care-Medicaid cases.

DCF's interest in supporting the reorganization of Medicaid is to further serve the children and families of Kansas under a unified public health care system. Having the eligibility determination for medical programs in two agencies has created a fragmented system with additional layers in establishing goals and measuring progress. DCF believes that integrating the eligibility determination into one State agency will provide better service to vulnerable Kansans.

DCF staff will continue to help families obtain the medical coverage they need, but their function will change. DCF's Economic and Employment Services field staff will be responsible for advising clients how to access the Medicaid program, and through the use of the integrated eligibility and imaging system, share client information as allowed by the federal regulations.

This is a commonsense reform that will strengthen DCF's ability to oversee foster care services, while improving the efficiency of service delivery to Medicaid clients. Thank you for the opportunity to present this information to your Committee.