

# Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators

## 2012 Legislative Initiatives

Minnesota counties recognize the budgetary challenges that face our State Legislature in this biennium and beyond. In our efforts to partner with policy makers and contribute solutions that move the state toward a more sustainable human services system, MACSSA recommends:

### Simplifying Human Services Programs

Administrative simplification has the potential to dramatically improve efficiency and effectiveness. It is a critical component to creating a more sustainable human services system. MACSSA recommends:



- *Providing automatic eligibility for Medical Assistance once Minnesota Family Investment Program or Diversionary Work Program Eligibility is established. Requiring an additional application is duplicative where clients who meet the income and asset guidelines for these programs will qualify for Medical Assistance.*
- *Transferring child care background studies to the Minnesota Department of Human Services to ensure a consistent method and interpretation of results without regard to county of licensure.*
- *Assuring counties maintain the ability to establish contracts with the private sector to broker transportation services.*
- *Providing administrative authority to suspend the child care obligation when the custodial parent fails to verify that child care expenses are being incurred. Current law allows for the custodial parent to disregard the public authority's request for verification resulting in the continuation of child care obligations when no expenses are incurred.*
- *Authorizing administrative removal of medical support obligations to a non custodial parent in situations where the custodial parent elects not to carry medical insurance that is being reimbursed through the medical support obligation of the non custodial parent.*
- *Ending interest charging on child support cases where not required by federal law. Maintaining interest charges on child support cases requires a diversion of county staff resources to perform time consuming complex manual calculations and adjustments.*
- *Passage of the Department of Human Services Child Welfare Policy bill. The proposal makes changes intended to reduce the barriers to adoption and enable the state to consistently manage youth transitioning out of placement and into independent living with assistance from counties.*

### Investments in Technology

A technology infrastructure which assures efficient administration of publicly-funded human services must be developed. MACSSA recommends

- *Reprogramming PRISM and MAXIS to automatically apply child support payments to a case.*
- *Reprogramming the Social Services Information System (SSIS) to directly interface with managed care electronic billing systems.*

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## Aligning Funding with Outcomes for Vulnerable Populations

Achieving expected outcomes has become increasingly difficult due to an unsustainable rate of growth in health care and long term care spending combined with decreasing State revenues. Investments must be strategically re-focused in programs that cost-effectively achieve desired outcomes. MACSSA recommends:

- *Expanding investments to family home visiting for at-risk families with newborns and young children to divert at-risk families from more cost intensive services.*
- *Providing counties an equivalent level of tort protection to that of the state for child care licensing functions.*
- *Authorizing counties to assess annual non-refundable child care licensing study fees of up to \$200 and up to an additional \$100 for background studies. Current maximum fees are not sufficient to support these services.*
- *Passage of the Northstar Care for Children Act. The disparity in payment between Relative Custody Assistance/Adoption Assistance and foster care is a barrier to achieving permanency for children. Passage of the Northstar Act would allow the state to access federal funding to assist in relative placements.*
- *Assuring the Commissioner of Human Services has equal opportunity at debt recovery based on a first claimed/first paid basis.*
- *Establishing pilot projects to align the resources and services of the Diversionary Work Program (DWP) more closely with the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program rather than the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.*
- *Providing sufficient state funding and resources to the child support service delivery system to ensure desired outcomes for recipients. Failure to maintain funding and resources jeopardizes Minnesota's ability to access Federal incentive funding and places the state at risk for fiscal penalties in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program if compliance thresholds are not met.*
- *Resource the expansion of the text message/new media suicide prevention service currently available in the Northeast quarter of Minnesota to allow for statewide use and more effective outreach and connection to youth at risk for suicide. Suicide rates in Minnesota continue to be unacceptably high among all age groups and the traditional use of "hotlines" has not addressed the evolving methods that many people, especially younger Minnesotans, use to reach out for help.*

MACSSA looks forward to engaging with the Legislature and all critical stakeholders to explore and pursue the recommended solutions.

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