

House Bill 142 Review: Required Councils and Reports

Summary of Recommendations

Prepared for the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee
June 2012

Background

House Bill 142 was approved in 2011 in order to review advisory councils and agency reports that are required by law. The bill gave interim committees the task of deciding whether any councils or reports should be eliminated or revised.

In May 2012, the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee reviewed 18 advisory groups and 15 reports related to the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS). The committee also took public comment on the councils and reports.

This briefing paper summarizes the recommendations and other information submitted to the committee in May, in order to assist committee members with HB 142-related decisions.

Recommendations by DPHHS

DPHHS recommended that seven councils and six reports be eliminated. The agency also suggested that the requirements for another report be changed.

The seven councils it recommended eliminating are:

- the Child Support Enforcement Advisory Board, Community Health Center Advisory Council, and the Montana 2-1-1 Community Coalition, because all three councils have been inactive in recent years;
- the Advisory Council on Food Safety, because it has had relatively little activity in food-safety issues and because its purpose of providing public comment on legislation and rules can be met in other ways;
- the Mental Health Oversight Advisory Council and Children's System of Care Planning Committee, because DPHHS could create a single, non-statutory council that could replace both groups and meet federal requirements for review of federal mental health and substance abuse grants; and
- the EMS Advisory Committee, because it has not been used in more than a decade and is a permissive, rather than statutorily required, committee.

DPHHS recommended eliminating six reports, either because they have not been produced in recent years or little action has been taken as a result of the reports. The reports involve:

- the state's trauma response system;
- the Older Montanans Trust Fund;
- mental health services for children with serious emotional disturbance;

- community health center grants;
- the statewide 2-1-1 calling system; and
- the Prescription Drug Plus discount program.

The agency also recommended that the suicide reduction plan be produced every 5 years, rather than every 2 years.

Recommendations by the Public

Members of the public suggested eliminating:

- the Community Health Center Advisory Council because the Legislature has not appropriated money for the related grant program in recent years; and
- the Commission on Provider Rates and Services because it has not met for more than a year and has had limited ability to obtain information for its work.

They recommended retaining:

- the Advisory Council on Food Safety and the Tobacco Prevention Advisory Board because both groups support the work of the Montana Public Health Association at the local level; and
- retaining regional Service Area Authorities that advise DPHHS on mental health issues.

Inactive Councils and Unpublished Reports

Information presented to the committee showed that five advisory councils are inactive, while five required reports have not been published in recent years.

The inactive councils are the: Child Support Enforcement Advisory Board, Commission on Provider Rates and Services, Community Health Center Advisory Council, Montana Community 2-1-1 Coalition, and Medicaid Managed Care Advisory Committee Council. The Medicaid council was created by the 2011 Legislature to provide review of managed care proposals; DPHHS has not proposed any new managed care efforts at this point, so the council has not met.

DPHHS has not prepared reports recently on community health center grants, the statewide 2-1-1 calling system, the effectiveness of Medicaid managed care standards, the Prescription Drug Plus Discount Program, and the work of the Commission on Provider Rates and Services.

Next Steps

HB 142 requires that interim committees determine whether any of the statutorily required councils or reports under their jurisdiction should be eliminated or revised. The Children and Families Committee must:

- determine whether any changes to DPHHS councils or reports are needed; and
- if so, request and approve legislation by the final meeting in August 2012.