

Testimony
Senate Bill 2312 – Department of Human Services
Senate Human Service Committee
Senator Judy Lee, Chairman
January 23, 2007

Chairman Lee, members of the Human Services Committee, I am Carol Cartledge, Director of Public Assistance of the Department of Human Services. I am here today to provide you with a information on Alternatives-to-Abortion Services.

2005 Senate Bill No. 2409 created and enacted the establishment of Alternatives to Abortion Service Program. The Department of Human Services established and implemented a procedure to facilitate funding to nongovernmental entities that provide alternative to abortion services. Services provided under this program promote childbirth instead of abortion by providing information, counseling, and support services that assist pregnant women or women who believe they may be pregnant to choose childbirth and to make informed decisions regarding the choice of adoption or parenting with respect to their children. Professional staff such as licensed nurses and social workers and para-professional staff such as nursing and social work interns provide services. Nine entities provide services that include assessment, counseling, education and referrals.

Service providers bill the Department of Human Services by using the Alternative to Abortion Services Payment Voucher. The form is used to collect billing information and outcome information as directed under Senate Bill 2409. Outcome information collected includes information on services provided and the outcome of the services provided, if known.

Approximately 580 women have taken advantage of these services from January 1, 2006 through October 31, 2006. The year to date total of services submitted for payment through December 2006 is \$96,212.

The Department of Human Services has a contract with the Mental Health Association for the use of their 2-1-1Get Connected. Get Answers. service. This statewide information, referral and crisis intervention service is free and operator-serviced 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Alternative-to-Abortion providers are part of the potential referrals for anyone that is pregnant or thinks they are pregnant. In addition, this information is being programmed onto the Mental Health Association's website. There is a three month contract with the Mental Health Association for the use of the 2-1-1 service and the programming of the website for \$5,700.

These are allowable services to be paid under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families TANF block grant. There is money within the TANF block grant allotment for the \$400,000 discussed in Senate Bill number 2312.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any question