

Testimony
Senate Bill 2108 –Department of Human Services
Senate Human Services Committee
Senator Lee, Chairman
January 16, 2013

Chairman Lee, members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Alex C. Schweitzer, Director of Field Services for the Department of Human Services (DHS). I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 2108, introduced at the request of the Department of Human Services.

Senate Bill 2108 makes changes to the statute in regard to the regional human service councils and the DHS regional human service centers (HSCs). Additionally, there are multiple changes that are more housekeeping than substantive changes.

Section 1, (1), line 14, cleans up language that describes the role of the regional HSCs.

The change on page 1, line 14, cleans up language that describes the role of regional HSCs. While these services are provided from the HSC locations, they are functions of divisions of the DHS central office.

The change on page 2, line 9, allows the Executive Director of DHS to appoint the members of each regional HSC's human service council, and changes the nature of the council to advisory group.

- The intent of the change is to clarify that the Executive Director of DHS has statutory authority over the regional HSCs and that local councils are advisory with respect to the day-to-day operation of the HSC.

The change on page 2, line 10, is a language change in respect to membership on the advisory group.

- The number of members was chosen to assure that the counties in the specific regions are well represented on the advisory group.

The change on page 2, lines 11 through 15, Section 1, (3), removes the requirement that members are appointed by the board of county commissioners of the respective counties in the region and requires each member of the advisory group to be a resident of a county served by the regional HSC.

- Again, the intent of the change was to clarify the authority of the Executive Director of DHS with respect to the regional HSCs and to establish residency requirements.

The changes on Page 2, lines 16 through 18, changes language to limit representation by county commissioners on the regional advisory group, not to exceed one-third of the members.

- The change is to reflect the change to an advisory group and to clean up the existing language.

The changes on page 2, lines 18 through 21, Section 1, (3), describes the term of office for the members of the regional advisory group.

- This change simply acknowledges that if an advisory group has fewer than 13 members, which it may, there won't be six or seven members whose terms will expire each year. Only one-half the member's terms will expire one year and one-half the next.

The changes on page 2, lines 21 through 31, Section 1, (3), line 21 through 31, requires the Executive Director of DHS to select members of each regional advisory group and appoint a chairman of each advisory group in the eight regions of the state.

- Again, these changes in this section relates to the authority of the Executive Director of DHS.

The changes on page 3, lines 1 through 9, requires the Executive Director of DHS to fill vacancies on the advisory group and cleans up language relative to, the compensation of members, and the expenses of the advisory members.

Section 2, (1), line 15 through 25, relates to the duties of the advisory group and removes (4), lines 23 and 24, relating to the review of budgets.

- The intent of this section delineates the responsibilities of advisory group members. An advisory member should provide information and advice that will assure effective regional planning, needs assessment, review of services and programs, promote cooperation between

community entities and financing authorities, and make recommendations that lead to improvement in services, programs, and facilities.

- Another significant change is the removal of budget review by the advisory group, which statutorily lies within the authority of the Executive Director of DHS or designee.

Section 3, line 29 through 31, removes the requirement that the Executive Director of DHS must consult with the regional human service council prior to appointing a regional HSC director and also allows for the Executive Director to designate authority over the regional director to a designee.

- Again, the intent of the change is to clarify the authority of the Executive Director of DHS or a designee over the regional HSC and the regional director.

Section 3, line 1 through 16, delineates the authority of the regional HSC director in relationship to the Executive Director of DHS or the director's designee, requires the regional director to hire a qualified medical director for the center who will coordinate mental health and medically-related services, allows for the medical director to be part-time or full-time and allows the regional director to be the medical director if the regional director is qualified to hold the position.

- This section, again, delineates the authority of the Executive Director of DHS or the director's designee and requires that a qualified medical director coordinate mental health and medically-related services in their respective region.

The Department requests your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 2108.

I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.