

**Department of Human Services
Interim Human Services Committee
Representative Kathy Hogan, Chairman
August 2, 2017**

Chairman Hogan and members of the Human Services Committee, I am Tom Solberg, Deputy Director for the Department of Human Services (Department). I am here to provide an overview of the role the Department serves in the refugee resettlement process.

Economic Assistance

The Department's Economic Assistance Programs, which includes the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Health Care Coverage Programs (HCC), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF), provide assistance to eligible individuals. Under federal law, individuals in the country illegally may not receive assistance with the exception of emergency Medicaid. The Economic Assistance Programs use the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) system to verify alien status.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Under federal law, to be eligible for CCAP, a child must either be a United States citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

To receive LIHEAP, an individual must be a U.S. citizen or an individual who has been determined to be an eligible alien.

However, since this program provides help to qualifying low-income households, if a person in a household is not a citizen or in the country legally, the household may still be able to qualify if legal residents reside in the home.

Health Care Coverage (HCC)

An individual who wants Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage must be a U.S. citizen or an alien who is in the country legally for permanent residence. However, Medicaid is required to provide emergency services coverage for illegal aliens. There is no CHIP coverage available for illegal aliens.

Aliens who lawfully entered the United States for permanent residence before August 22, 1996, and who meet all other Medicaid criteria may be eligible for Medicaid.

Aliens admitted for Lawful Permanent Residence (LPR) on or after August 22, 1996 are prohibited from Medicaid for five years from the date they obtained LPR status. After the five-year ban, aliens who are lawful permanent residents who can be credited with 40 qualifying quarters of Social Security coverage may be eligible for Medicaid.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

To receive SNAP benefits, an individual must be a U.S. citizen or an individual who has been determined to be an eligible alien. However, since this program provides help to qualifying low-income households, if a person in a household is not a citizen or in the

country legally, the household may still be able to qualify if legal residents reside in the home.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Qualified members (members who are lawfully admitted for permanent residence), refugees, asylees granted asylum, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and victims of a severe form of human trafficking in the household may receive TANF assistance.

Qualified aliens who entered the United States for permanent residence on or after August 22, 1996, are not eligible for any federally-funded TANF benefit for five years from the date they entered the United States. This five-year period is also known as a “five-year ban on benefits” and is effective on the date the individual entered the country as a qualified alien, or the date the individual becomes a qualified alien, whichever is later.

Children and Family Services

The Department and Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota (LSS/ND) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in May 2010 that outlines the transfer of the responsibilities of a designated agency from the Department to LSS/ND. As of October 1, 2010, the date of implementation of the MOU, LSS/ND is the agency responsible for developing, administering, and supervising the management of the State Plan for Refugee Resettlement Services as well as becoming the State Coordinating agency.

The Department is responsible to submit the annual State Refugee Plan to the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, and administers

the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) program, and the Refugee Medical Assistance Program.

The Refugee Medical Assistance Program is a program designed to cover medical expenses for all individuals who are legally admitted to the United States as a Refugee or URM. Refugees are always tested to see if they meet Medicaid eligibility criteria including need. Medicaid receives 100 percent federal funding for Refugee Medical Assistance.

Beginning in 2014 with the implementation of Medicaid Expansion, if a refugee has income greater than 138 percent of the federal poverty level, the refugee is eligible for Refugee Medical Assistance. If their income is at or below 138 percent of poverty, the applicant is eligible for traditional Medicaid (with or without a client share), Children's Health Insurance Program, or Medicaid Expansion.

When an URM arrives in North Dakota, LSS/ND obtains guardianship of the child and places the child in a foster home that is licensed by the Department. Some of the Department's responsibilities in the URM program are: work collaboratively with LSS/ND; act as the pass-through agent for the reimbursement of URM costs (direct payments to URM homes and to LSS-ND for their administrative costs); submit status reports; license and monitor LSS-ND as a licensed Child Placing Agency in the state; continue child protection oversight/assessment for all URM youth and families; review URM treatment plans on a quarterly basis; and attend quarterly refugee advisory committee meetings.

This concludes my testimony and I'll answer any questions that you may have.