

Testimony
Senate Bill 2312 – Department of Human Services
House Human Service Committee
Representative Clara Sue Price, Chairman
February 26, 2007

Chairman Price, 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 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 1,030 women have taken advantage of these services from January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006. The year to date total of services submitted for payment through December 2006 is \$99,720.

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 has been programmed onto the Mental Health Association's website. The contract with the Mental Health Association for the use of the 2-1-1 service and the programming of the website to include alternative to abortion information was \$5,700 for 2006.

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 questions.