

Testimony
Engrossed Senate Bill 2291-Department of Human Services
House Human Services Committee
Representative Robin Weisz, Chairman

March 5, 2019

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Pamela Sagness, Director of the Behavioral Health Division of the Department of Human Services (Department). I appear today to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2291.

Recommendation 9.8 of the Behavioral Health System Study (April 2018) is to ensure a trauma-informed system. A trauma-informed approach rests on the following key assumptions: a program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and other involved with the system; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.

The Department adopted trauma-informed work as a key principle in 2015. Senate Bill 2291 provides the opportunity to build on that work by creating a trauma-informed practices working group which will assess and guide efforts and establish, implement and maintain a statewide plan for trauma-informed care. This work is essential to ensure trauma-informed practices are integrated across systems.

Senate Bill 2291 also directs the Department to maintain a network of clinicians to implement, evaluate and sustain the practice of evidence-based mental health treatment for children who have experienced traumatic life events. Currently, the Department maintains the Treatment Collaborative for Traumatized Youth (TCTY),

which is a network of over 350 clinicians representing 40 different agencies across the state trained in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

This concludes my testimony, and I am happy to answer any questions.