



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES

REVISED

Room 411 South, State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin

November 5, 2007
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

[The following is a summary of the November 5, 2007 meeting of the Special Committee on Strengthening Wisconsin Families. The file copy of this summary has appended to it a copy of each document prepared for or submitted to the committee during the meeting. A digital recording of the meeting is available on our Web site at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc>.]

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Kestell called the meeting to order. The roll was called and a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Steve Kestell, Chair; Rep. Don Pridemore; Sen. Dale Schultz; and Public Members Jon Angeli, Lisa Boyd-Gonzalez, John Burgess, Paul Minkus, Kenneth Munson, Jack Westman, and Carol Wright.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED: Sen. Lena Taylor; Rep. Donna Seidel; and Public Members Charity Eleson, Jodi Roberts, and Paula Roberts.

COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT: Laura Rose, Deputy Director; Anne Sappenfield, Senior Staff Attorney; and Scott Grosz, Staff Attorney.

Approval of the Minutes of the October 1, 2007 Meeting

Mr. Westman moved, seconded by Mr. Burgess, to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2007 meeting of the Special Committee. The motion was approved by a voice vote.

Discussion of Committee Assignment and Materials Distributed

Laura Rose described WLC: 0075/4, relating to coordinated services teams. Chair Kestell noted mixed feelings regarding the draft and the likely reaction to it by the rest of the Legislature. He invited the committee to discuss the draft. Mr. Angeli raised the question of why similar programs have not yet been implemented, given the financial savings to counties the draft should provide. Chair Kestell asked if the burden of start-up costs and on-going costs prevented implementation of the programs. Chair Kestell also invited Dan Naylor, White Pine Consulting Service, Inc., to discuss the draft. Mr. Naylor had been a resource to the committee during drafting and prior discussion of WLC: 0075/4. Mr. Naylor provided additional information regarding the financial savings that likely would be provided to both the state and counties through the increased use of coordinated services teams.

Mr. Westman noted that coordinated services teams provide benefits to both state and county interests. He suggested that the committee focus on changing the priorities of these entities to support coordinated services teams and to emphasize the undesirable outcomes that might occur in the absence of the teams. Mr. Munson noted that, in his opinion, the testimony received by the committee regarding coordinated services teams was sufficient for him to support the draft. He stated that the draft would improve outcomes for Wisconsin families. He asked about efforts committee members could make to inform other policymakers about the benefits of the proposed draft.

Chair Kestell invited motions regarding the proposal. Anne Sappenfield described an amendment to the proposal introduced by Mr. Westman. Generally, the amendment introduced the phrase “family resources” and substituted the phrase for “services” when applicable.

Mr. Burgess moved, seconded by Mr. Westman, to adopt the amendment. The committee adopted the amendment by a vote of Ayes; 11, (Reps. Kestell and Pridemore; Sens. Schultz and Taylor; and Public Members Angeli, Boyd-Gonzalez, Burgess, Minkus, Munson, Westman, and Wright); Noes, 0; and Absent, 4 (Rep. Seidel; and Public Members Eleson, J. Roberts, and P. Roberts).

Mr. Burgess moved, seconded by Ms. Wright, to recommend introduction of WLC: 0075/4. The committee recommended introduction of WLC: 0075/4, as amended, by a vote of Ayes, 11 (Reps. Kestell and Pridemore; Sens. Schultz and Taylor; and Public Members Angeli, Boyd-Gonzalez, Burgess, Minkus, Munson, Westman, and Wright); Noes, 0; and Absent, 4 (Rep. Seidel; and Public Members Eleson, J. Roberts, and P. Roberts).

Chair Kestell described the results of several meetings between Legislative Council staff, certain members of the committee, and staff from the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) and the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). As a result of those meetings, several letters were drafted to the two departments. Chair Kestell described the content of the letters, which encouraged the implementation of family systems theory into DHFS and DWD staff training, and asked for committee consensus to send the letters. The committee agreed to send the letters.

Ms. Sappenfield informed the committee of discussions between Legislative Council Staff, Mr. Burgess, and staff from DHFS regarding medical waivers to federal funding for home visitation

programs. The discussions revealed that it is unlikely that home visitation programs could obtain waivers. However, during the meetings, department staff members noted that home visitation programs may be able to offer their services to health care providers currently receiving federal funding. Mr. Burgess noted that he would pursue the development of mutually beneficial relationships between home visitors and health care providers.

Ms. Sappenfield described WLC: 0171/1, relating to home visitation grants. This draft would make changes to Wisconsin law regarding distribution of home visitation grants as well as changes to reporting and evaluation procedures for home visitation programs. The draft was developed based on a proposal prepared by Sandy Ellis, Director of Prevention, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin; Jennifer Hammel, Child Abuse Prevention Fund Director, Children's Hospital and Health System; Audrey Laszewski, Project Director, The Early Years Home Visitation Outcome Project of Wisconsin; and Polly Snodgrass, Program Director, Healthy Families/Prenatal Care Coordination, Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin.

Committee members discussed the draft. Ms. Sappenfield responded to several concerns raised by DHFS. Several concerns were dismissed as they related to content in a prior proposal that was not incorporated in WLC: 0171/1. Additionally, the committee proposed that the following amendments, related to other concerns raised by DHFS, be incorporated into the draft:

- On page 5, the draft as amended will specify that a family of a child who is identified as being at risk of abuse or neglect will continue to receive services until the child reaches the age of three years regardless of whether the child continues to be eligible for medical assistance *if* the family has received home visitation services continuously for at least 12 months.
- On page 6, the bill draft will require DHFS to evaluate the availability of home visitation services in the state instead of conduct an evaluation of the availability of such services.
- On page 8, the bill draft will be amended to provide that training may not be limited to a particular model instead of specific to a particular model.

Mr. Munson moved, seconded by Mr. Burgess, to recommend introduction of WLC: 0171/1, as amended by the committee. The committee recommended introduction of WLC: 0171/1, as amended, by a vote of Ayes, 11 (Reps. Kestell and Pridemore; Sens. Schultz and Taylor; and Public Members Angeli, Boyd-Gonzalez, Burgess, Minkus, Munson, Westman, and Wright); Noes, 0; and Absent, 4 (Rep. Seidel; and Public Members, Eleson, J. Roberts, and P. Roberts).

Other Business

There was no other business before the Special Committee at this time.

Plans for Future Meetings

Chair Kestell noted that this would be the final meeting of the committee. He thanked the committee members and Legislative Council staff for their efforts and noted that the committee's work is not yet complete. He outlined the process by which the committee would be re-formed during the next session and suggested that members contact the Legislative Council and its Co-Chairs to express their interest in serving on the next iteration of the committee.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

SG:ty