



TO: Honorable Members of the Legislative Council Special Committee on Chapter 51

FROM: Vicki Tylka, President, Wisconsin County Human Services Association
Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf, Senior Legislative Associate, Wisconsin Counties Association

DATE: May 14, 2012

SUBJECT: Comments on WLC 0112/2 and WLC 0073/2

The Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA) and the Wisconsin Counties Association offer the following comments for your consideration on the bill drafts before the committee for discussion.

WLC 0112/2 - Adding Additional Members to the Community Programs Board

Counties have expressed enormous concern regarding conflicts of interest if a hospital representative and a police officer are added to the community programs board. It is inappropriate for a contracted service provider to serve on a governmental committee that has oversight over its contract.

Including these organizations in an advisory capacity or on an advisory board at the discretion of counties (as is current practice) seems to be the most appropriate method of addressing their concerns about the detention process. As community programs boards have oversight over a wide variety of human services programs, placing members on the board who represent a single issue (emergency detention) seems unwarranted. If hospitals and law enforcement officers are given a seat on community programs boards, there is concern the floodgates will open and other special interest groups will request membership as well.

WCHSA and WCA respectfully request that the committee oppose WLC 0112/2 and allow current practice to continue.

WLC 0073/2 - Changing the Protocols for Emergency Detention Decisions

The recommended changes would seem to lend themselves to having to make involuntary placements, which could have a significant fiscal impact on counties. Having to make a

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determination that “detention is the least restrictive alternative because the individual is resistant to professional help or too high risk to be safely assisted on a voluntary basis...” could be a standard that would probably apply to the vast majority of clients for whom there is an emergency detention request. Increasing the number of reasons for delaying a court hearing will also increase the length of stay in hospitals and have a significant fiscal impact on counties.

Thank you for considering our comments.