



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #810

School of Public Health (UW System)

[LFB 2009-11 Budget Summary: Page 659, #19]

CURRENT LAW

The Board of Regents may not create a new school with academic programs at the graduate, professional, or post-baccalaureate level unless specifically authorized by the Legislature to do so.

Under 2007 Act 25, the Board is required to reallocate \$200,000 in 2008-09 from its general program operations appropriation to establish a school of public health at UW-Milwaukee.

GOVERNOR

Permit the Board of Regents to create a school of public health at UW-Milwaukee.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Pending authorization by the Legislature, the UW Board of Regents approved the establishment of a school of public health (SPH) at UW-Milwaukee in June, 2008. According to Regents' materials, the mission of the SPH would be to: (1) act as a center of public health research and scholarship; (2) educate the current and future public health workforce; and (3) influence the development of strategies and policies that promote health among diverse populations.

2. Development of the School began in fall, 2005, when the Board of Regents charged UW-Milwaukee and UW System Administration (UWSA) to work with the City of Milwaukee to examine possible public health initiatives at UW-Milwaukee including the development of a SPH. In December, 2006, UW-Milwaukee and UWSA recommended that the Board establish a SPH at UW-Milwaukee.

3. According to the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH), public health is

the science and art of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research for disease and injury prevention. Public health differs from traditional medicine in that it focuses on prevention, as opposed to diagnosis and treatment, and on whole populations, instead of individual patients or clients. Examples of public health issues include tobacco and alcohol use and abuse, diet and obesity, the presence of harmful substances in the air and water, immunization, and communicable diseases.

4. The proposed SPH would address public health issues specific to Milwaukee. In general, the city of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County rank among the worst areas in the state in terms of health determinants and health outcomes. According to a 2005 study by the UW Population Health Institute, Milwaukee County ranked 71st in terms of health determinants and 65th in terms of health outcomes of the state's 72 counties. The proposed SPH at UW-Milwaukee would partner with state and local agencies, community-based organizations, and other academic units to address public health issues in Milwaukee and the state through the application of research findings, education, and outreach.

5. As indicated in the report prepared for the Board of Regents, a SPH at UW-Milwaukee would also address public health workforce needs. The state health plan identifies the development of a sufficient, competent workforce as a key infrastructure priority. Similar to other sectors of the workforce, a significant portion of the public health workforce is expected to retire in the coming years. According to the report, 50% of all state and local health department employees in Wisconsin were age 50 or older as of 2005. By preparing students to fill these jobs in the future, the proposed SPH would be contributing to the goal of developing a sufficient public health workforce. In addition, the state health plan specifies that a competent public health workforce should be created through a collaborative information and education network for workforce preparation, support of current practice, and continuing education. By offering programs aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of the current and future public health workforce, the proposed SPH would play an important role in this network.

6. According to the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), an accrediting body, there are five areas of knowledge basic to public health: (a) biostatistics; (b) epidemiology; (c) environmental health services; (d) health services administration; and (e) social and behavioral sciences. To be eligible for accreditation by CEPH, a SPH must offer the Master of Public Health degree in each of the five areas of knowledge basic to public health and a doctoral degree in at least three of these five areas. Under the proposal, the SPH, which would seek accreditation by CEPH, would offer the required MPH degrees and doctoral degrees (Ph.D.s) in four areas of public health including environmental and occupational health, public health administration and policy, epidemiology, and social sciences and community health.

7. The School would also offer a graduate certificate in public health. This certificate program was established during the 2008-09 academic year and is currently housed in the College of Nursing and the College of Health Sciences. In addition to these programs, it is anticipated that the School would offer continuing education programs aimed at current public health workers through both traditional and online formats.

8. According to planning documents, it is anticipated that students would begin

enrolling in the environmental and occupational health Ph.D. program in fall, 2009, and in the MPH program in fall, 2010. It is unknown when students would begin enrolling in the remaining three Ph.D. programs. It is estimated that when the School is fully staffed enrollment could reach 165 students.

9. Currently, UW-La Crosse, the Medical College of Wisconsin, and UW-Madison offer MPH programs. While UW-La Crosse offers a single degree in community health education, both UW-Madison and the Medical College offer MPH degrees in all five of the core knowledge areas similar to the degrees that would be offered by the proposed SPH at UW-Milwaukee. Both institutions also offer Ph.D. programs in public health. Unlike the proposed MPH program at UW-Milwaukee, the MPH program at the Medical College is offered exclusively online.

10. In lieu of creating a SPH, UW-Milwaukee could offer degrees in public health at the masters and doctoral levels through an existing school such as the College of Nursing or the College of Health Services. These individual degree programs would be eligible for accreditation by CEPH. According to staff at UW-Milwaukee, the primary benefit of establishing a separate SPH that would be eligible for accreditation is that such a school would have faculty who specialize in a wide range of areas. Having such a faculty would benefit the students, who would have both a strong background in the five core knowledge areas of public health and have a wide range of options in terms of specialization areas, and the community, who would benefit from the research and public service efforts of those faculty members. In addition, accreditation may make the School more attractive to potential students and more competitive for federal and private research grants.

11. In April, the State Building Commission approved its capital budget recommendations for the 2009-11 biennium. Included in the Building Commission's recommendations is an enumeration of \$240,000,000 for the Milwaukee master plan initiative. This amount would include funding for the acquisition of land and the development of a facility for the proposed SPH which would include space for CMHD. According to Regents' materials, the total cost of such a facility could be \$25 million. In September, 2007, Joseph Zilber, a Milwaukee real estate developer and philanthropist, donated \$10 million to UW-Milwaukee to fund infrastructure costs associated with the proposed facility.

12. It is anticipated that the SPH facility would include administrative and clinical space for use by the City of Milwaukee Health Department (CMHD). This would facilitate collaboration between the proposed SPH and CMHD who would form what is known as an academic health department (AHD). Under this model, which is currently employed by 14 SPHs, senior staff at the CMHD would be appointed as adjunct or regular faculty and would assume the teaching and research responsibilities incumbent to those positions. The benefits of an AHD to the SPH would include established field placements for students, courses that are taught by instructors with years of practical experience in public health fields, and access to public health data collected by the CMHD. For the CMHD, the benefits would include access to the SPH's faculty and students who would provide additional workforce resources to the Department.

13. According Regents materials, 2.5 FTE positions are associated with the proposed SPH in the current year. These positions include one academic staff person whose duties are related to development of the School and academic planning. In addition, there are currently 1.5 faculty

positions associated with the proposed School; these are three faculty members who are jointly appointed to the CUPH and the SPH. It is anticipated that five positions would be added in 2009-10 bringing the total number of positions to 7.5 FTE. These new positions would include: a dean funded through a base reallocation; three faculty positions in the area of environmental health who would be supported by funding provided under 2007 Act 20 for the UW-Milwaukee research growth initiative; and one classified staff position. In 2008-09, the SPH has a base budget of \$280,000. According to planning documents, this figure is expected to increase to \$1 million in 2010-11 without any new investment by the state.

14. According to the proposal, it is anticipated that the SPH would have a total of 36 faculty members when fully staffed. Based on the budgets of SPHs that are similar in size, it is anticipated that the proposed SPH would have an annual base budget of \$5 to \$10 million. Of this amount, \$1 million is expected to come from tuition revenues. The remainder of this funding would come from state general purpose revenues and certain unrestricted federal funds, grants, and gifts and donations. In addition to this base budget, it is estimated that the School generate \$16 million annually in federal and private grants and contracts.

15. In its agency budget request, the Board of Regents requested \$2,500,000 and 18.0 positions in 2010-11 for the proposed SPH. The positions requested included 15 additional faculty positions and three support staff positions. However, AB 75 does not include any funding to support the proposed SPH. In the absence of additional state funding, the proposed School would be funded through campus reallocations, grants, and funding received for the research growth initiative under 2007 Act 20. Because UW-Milwaukee could begin the process of establishing the proposed SPH in the 2009-11 biennium, the Committee could approve the Governor's recommendation. However, without the commitment of new state resources, the development of the School and its academic programs would be delayed.

16. AB 75 includes a GPR base budget reduction of \$120 million for the UW System. According to UW System Administration, it is anticipated that UW-Milwaukee's GPR budget would be reduced by \$15.7 million over the biennium as a result of these base budget reductions. At this time, it is unclear how these reductions in base GPR funding for UW-Milwaukee would affect the proposed SPH. Given the current economic downturn and the proposed reductions to the UW System budget, it may be undesirable to authorize this program expansion at UW-Milwaukee. Under this alternative, UW-Milwaukee could continue to build degree programs in public health under the existing College of Nursing and College of Health Services.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation.
2. Delete provision.

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