



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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May 30, 2013

Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #328

### MA Quarterly Reports (DHS -- Medical Assistance and Related Programs)

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#### CURRENT LAW

2011 Wisconsin Act 32 (the 2011-13 biennial budget act) included a provision that required the Department of Health Services (DHS) to submit quarterly reports to the Joint Committee on Finance containing the following information on the state's medical assistance (MA) program: (a) updated descriptions of any MA program changes implemented by DHS, including a description of any amendments to the state MA plan; (b) updated estimates of savings that DHS expected to realize as a result of program changes; and (c) updated projections of the total MA benefit expenditures during the biennium and an analysis of how these projected expenditures compare to the funding provided in the 2011-13 biennial budget act.

This provision was codified under s. 49.45(2m) of the statutes as part of other provisions that authorize DHS to make certain changes to the MA program that may conflict with other MA statutes with the approval of the Joint Committee on Finance and, where necessary, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Under Act 32, all of these provisions are repealed effective January 1, 2015.

#### GOVERNOR

No provision.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

1. During the current biennium, the DHS quarterly reports have been useful in informing legislators of program changes that DHS has implemented, or planned to implement as a matter of policy, identifying factors that have contributed to spending trends in the program, and

improving communication between the agency, Committee members, and staff.

2. Although the provision was intended to assist legislators in monitoring the effect of program changes and monitoring program savings targets that were enacted in Act 32, the quarterly reports the Committee has been receiving would continue to be useful in the future, particularly with the program changes that will occur with the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

3. During the Committee's agency briefing, the Department's Secretary indicated that DHS intended to continue to prepare the quarterly reports. Given the usefulness of the reports to both the executive and legislative branches, it would be beneficial to have them continue into future biennia.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Require DHS to continue to provide quarterly reports to the Joint Committee on Finance on the status of the MA program, as described above.

2. Take no action.

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