



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #491

Women's Health (DHFS -- Health)

[LFB 2001-03 Budget Summary: Page 372, #5 (part)]

CURRENT LAW

1997 Wisconsin Act 27 (the 1997-99 biennial budget act) provided the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) 1.0 GPR position to serve as the women's health officer as part of a larger initiative to address the special health care concerns of women. 1999 Wisconsin Act 9 (the 1999-01 biennial budget act) provided additional funding to support the initiative, including \$14,000 GPR in 2000-01 to fund administrative support to the women's health officer, \$10,000 GPR annually to increase support for women's health conferences and \$50,000 annually for a women's health hotline.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$100,000 GPR annually and 1.5 GPR positions, beginning in 2001-02, to expand the women's health program. Funding would be provided for the following: (a) \$51,600 GPR in 2001-02 and \$57,400 GPR in 2002-03 to support 1.0 GPR program assistant and 0.5 GPR public health nutritionist; and (b) \$48,400 GPR in 2001-02 and \$42,600 GPR in 2002-03 to increase support for program activities, including regional conferences, roundtables, updating videotapes on women's health issues and developing nutrition fact sheets.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The women's health officer works to improve the health status of women in Wisconsin and to increase awareness of women's health issues and the Department's women's health programs. The position: (1) provides management and leadership in the development and implementation of the Department's women's health initiatives; (2) is the principal advisor to the Division Administrator and DHFS Secretary on women's health issues; (3) is the primary

departmental contact for women's health issues; (4) provides statewide consultation and technical assistance to community organizations on a broad range of health issues; and (5) conducts other activities, including establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with the Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation and other groups to improve women's health status.

2. In its 2001-03 budget submission, DHFS did not request any additional funding or staff support for the women's health program.

3. The bill would provide \$27,400 GPR in 2001-02 and \$29,400 GPR in 2002-03 to fund 1.0 GPR program assistant position to provide permanent clerical support for the women's health program. The position would assist with mailing information to local health organizations, updating the website, collecting information from the women's hotline and coordinating program correspondence.

4. To date, DHFS has provided program support for the women's health officer by reallocating DHFS staff to address this workload. However, DHFS staff indicate that this has not provided the level of support the women's health officer needs to promote women's health issues statewide. As a result, the women's health officer has had to perform much of the clerical work herself, which has reduced the amount of time she has been able to spend performing her other responsibilities.

5. 1999 Act 9 provided \$14,000 GPR annually in LTE funding to provide some support for the women's health program. However, due to an internal reorganization, DHFS reallocated this LTE funding to support other functions within the Division of Public Health. Because this funding was provided in Act 9 specifically to address the clerical needs of the women's health officer, the Committee could delete DHFS base funding by \$14,000 GPR annually if it approves the Governor's recommendation to provide 1.0 GPR program assistant position to perform this work.

6. DHFS has provided little information that documents the need for the additional program assistant position, other than to indicate that the current position could spend more time on her professional work if this additional program assistant position were created. However, if the Committee determines that it is not essential at this time to provide an additional administrative position to the Division of Public Health, it could delete the position and funding from the bill.

6. The bill would also provide \$24,200 GPR in 2001-02 and \$28,000 GPR in 2002-03 for 0.5 GPR nutritionist position, beginning in 2001-02. This position would update videos on women's health, develop fact sheets on women's health issues and assist DHFS in its overweight and obesity initiative to raise the awareness of the health implications related to being overweight.

7. The DHFS Bureau of Chronic Disease and Bureau of Maternal and Child Health have jointly created several briefs outlining women's health issues including osteoporosis, breast cancer, domestic violence, depression, heart disease and sexual assault prevention. In addition, eight fact sheets have been prepared on different nutritional topics focused on women's health

including the importance of iron, eating for strong bones, diabetes, blood pressure, the importance of a well balanced diet, methods for handling stress, and the need for physical activity and other ways to reduce weight. The DHFS website also has short videos on several of these topics.

8. Given that this type of information is already being prepared on women health issues, including nutrition, it is not clear why DHFS requires additional staffing to develop additional materials. For this reason, the Committee may want to delete the half-time position and associated funding, for savings of \$52,200 over the biennium.

9. In addition to the staff, the bill would provide additional supplies and services funding of \$48,400 in 2001-02 and \$42,600 in 2002-03 to expand women's health outreach efforts. According to the administration, this funding would be used to fund one regional women's health conference in each of the five public health regions in the state, host roundtables across the state on women's health issues and other activities.

10. DHFS hosted the first state women's health conference in April, 1998. 1999 Act 9 provided \$10,000 GPR to offset future expenses related to the annual conference. For 2001, the Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation performed much of the planning and coordination of the conference. DHFS contributed \$39,500 to the 2001 conference, including the \$10,000 GPR provided in the last biennium, and an additional \$15,000 GPR from the women's health services appropriation. A total of 614 people registered for the 2001 conference.

11. The Women's Health Foundation also holds statewide roundtables to inform women about cardiovascular disease, breast cancer, osteoporosis, mental health, domestic violence and the health risks of tobacco use. According to the Foundation, the roundtables are casual, personal ways to encourage women to become advocates for their health and the health of their families. A total of 13 roundtables are planned for 2001.

12. While women's health issues are important to the state, it is not clear that it is necessary to provide additional state funding for these efforts, given the current outreach and educational activities of the DHFS women's health program and the Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation. The Committee could delete the additional \$48,400 GPR in 2001-02 and \$42,600 GPR in 2002-03 that the bill would provide for this purpose.

ALTERNATIVES TO BILL

1. Approve the Governor's to provide \$100,000 GPR and 1.5 GPR positions, beginning in 2001-02, to expand the women's health program. This funding would be provided as follows: (a) \$51,600 GPR in 2001-02 and \$57,400 GPR in 2002-03 to support 1.0 GPR program assistant and 0.5 GPR public health nutritionist; and (b) \$48,400 GPR in 2001-02 and \$42,60 GPR in 2002-03 to increase support for program activities, including regional conferences, roundtables, updating videotapes on women's health issues and developing nutrition fact sheets.

2. Modify the bill to do one or more of the following:

a. Reduce funding by \$14,000 GPR annually to delete base funding provided in 1999 Act 9 to provide clerical support for the women's health officer.

Alternative 2a	GPR
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Bill)	- \$28,000

b. Reduce funding by \$27,400 GPR in 2001-02 and \$29,400 GPR in 2002-03 and delete 1.0 GPR program assistant position.

Alternative 2b	GPR
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Bill)	- \$56,800
2002-03 POSITIONS (Change to Bill)	- 1.00

c. Reduce funding by \$24,200 GPR in 2001-02 and \$28,000 GPR in 2002-03 and delete 0.5 GPR nutritionist position.

Alternative 2c	GPR
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Bill)	- \$52,200
2002-03 POSITIONS (Change to Bill)	- 0.50

d. Reduce funding by \$48,400 GPR in 2001-02 and \$42,600 GPR in 2002-03 to eliminate supplies and services funding for expansion of women's health activities.

Alternative 2d	GPR
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Bill)	- \$91,000

3. Maintain current law.

Alternative 3	GPR
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Bill)	- \$200,000
2002-03 POSITIONS (Change to Bill)	- 1.50

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