



GIVE ME A VOICE

Lutheran Services in Iowa's 2010 Advocacy Impact Points

www.lsiowa.org/advocacy.asp

Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) strongly opposes any proposed cuts to human services for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2011. The cut to provider rates in SFY 2010 has already created hardships for community human service nonprofits. Any additional cut to the Department of Human Services (DHS) budget in SFY 2011 would be a catastrophic blow to DHS and nonprofits like LSI and would be equally as detrimental to Iowa's most vulnerable children, families and individuals who rely on services the state and LSI provide.

Impact Points

- 1) With already established provider rate cuts and the possibility of additional cuts to the Department of Human Services budget, the state cannot expect nonprofit human services providers like LSI to continue to be able to implement all programs for children and families currently in place.
- 2) To ensure high quality services that produce positive outcomes can continue to be provided to Iowa children and families, the state must prioritize services in a way that allows DHS and private providers to focus on Iowa's most vulnerable populations.
- 3) Child welfare services should be fully funded by the state allowing public and private providers to maintain federal government standards that determine federal funding for these services. Cutting child welfare services could jeopardize outcomes and in turn important federal funding.

Detailed Explanations

1) State's expectation of nonprofit providers

With already established provider rate cuts and the possibility of additional cuts to the Department of Human Services budget, the state cannot expect nonprofit human services providers like LSI to continue to be able to implement all programs for children and families currently in place.

LSI is thankful for the progress that has been made in establishing a partnership with the state. Through this partnership, substantial progress has been made to improve outcomes for children and families. However, the most recent cut to provider rates has forced LSI and other nonprofits to do the same amount of work with fewer financial resources. This trend cannot continue. The state cannot expect nonprofits to continue to do what they are doing at current budget levels, let alone with additional cuts.

Programs for children and families have been under funded for many years. The Consumer Price Index – Urban adjusted rate has outpaced the across the board rate increases for providers by 12.16% over the last decade.¹ The most recent provider rate cut is a severe blow to nonprofits and any



GIVE ME A VOICE

Lutheran Services in Iowa's 2010 Advocacy Impact Points

www.lsiowa.org/advocacy.asp

additional cuts would be catastrophic to LSI's ability to continue providing the services currently in place that work to prevent abuse and neglect, create safety and permanency for children, strengthen at-risk families and support independence for people with disabilities.

Additional cuts in provider rates would force LSI to cut entire programs leaving children and families with no where to turn for services. This decrease in people served would come at a time when rising unemployment and chronic poverty are creating an even greater need for services like those provided by LSI.

¹ *The Child and Welfare Provider Growth Options Committee Final Report submitted to the Iowa Legislature on February 6, 2009 from December 1998 to December 2007.*

2) Prioritization of programs and services

To ensure high quality services that produce positive outcomes can continue to be provided to Iowa children and families, the state must prioritize services in a way that allows DHS and private providers to focus on Iowa's most vulnerable populations.

Currently, the number of children, families and individuals who need and use state funded services is increasing due to negative economic factors. Maintaining the quantity of services at the same quality under the current budget conditions is an unrealistic challenge for both the DHS and private nonprofit providers. For this reason, the state must prioritize programs and services in a way that allows DHS and nonprofits to partner in the most effective and efficient manner.

Prioritization will allow DHS to determine its top priorities in regards to serving Iowa's children and families and will enhance the partnership with private providers to create a streamlined system of services that create positive outcomes for clients. Through this prioritization, nonprofit human services providers, including LSI, will be able to better focus on the most critical areas of need for children and families. Nonprofits will also be able to organize services and appropriate resources in the best way to ensure quality services can be provided.

Prioritizing services will lead to a more effective and efficient system in regard to serving the highest risk populations and would create cost-savings, potentially eliminating the need to make further cuts to the human services budget. While this process would not be easy, it would aid in continuing programs that effectively prevent abuse and neglect and successfully lead to self-sufficiency. The alternative is serving more people ineffectively which ultimately will lead to a greater financial burden as the cycle of need repeats.



GIVE ME A VOICE

Lutheran Services in Iowa's 2010 Advocacy Impact Points

www.lsiowa.org/advocacy.asp

3) Child welfare services must be fully funded by the state

Child welfare services should be fully funded by the state allowing public and private providers to maintain federal government standards that determine federal funding for these services. Cutting child welfare services budgets could jeopardize outcomes and in turn important federal funding.

The federal government holds DHS accountable for achieving safety, permanency and well-being outcomes through the child and family services review (CFSR). The review examines state child welfare agency performance and evaluates if Iowa (through both DHS and private agencies) is improving outcomes for the children and families whom they serve. Federal funding to state child welfare services is based on the evaluation completed by the CFSR. Decreasing state funding for these programs would diminish the ability of DHS and nonprofits to continue to create successful outcomes, jeopardizing important federal funding.

In order to maintain quality services that provide successful outcomes, state child welfare funding must be maintained. This allows DHS and nonprofits like LSI to continue providing important proven programs and retain professional staff. By maintaining the funding for programs that effectively prevent abuse and neglect, create permanency when possible and successfully lead to self-sufficiency, the state ensures important federal dollars are not taken from services already negatively impacted by state budget restraints.

Conclusion

The State of Iowa has worked very hard to develop a system which provides vital services to the most vulnerable children and families in the state. Any proposed cuts for SFY 2011 would come on top of years of under funding to these programs. Cuts to the child and family services network would cause immeasurable harm to innocent dependent children and at-risk families. The negative impact on individual children, entire families, communities and the economy if cuts are adopted would simply be too great. From both a human and economic perspective, we urge you to reject any proposed cuts to the public and private side of the children and family services network.

For further information contact:

Lyle Krewson, Lutheran Services in Iowa, 515-238-7113

E-mail: lylekrewson@mchsi.com

Kaye Englin, Lutheran Services in Iowa, 319-859-3521

E-mail: kaye.englin@lsiowa.org

