

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FINAL REPORT

A STUDY OF THE
DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL
SERVICE FUNDS

Prepared by the
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON HEALTH AND INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES
107th Legislature

Submitted to the
Legislative Council
107th Legislature

December 28, 1976

SENATE

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STATE OF MAINE

ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES

January 7, 1977

Rep. John L. Martin
Chairman, Legislative Council
c/o Speaker's Office
State House
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Representative Martin:

In accordance with S.P. 180 which ordered a study of the distribution of social service funds, we enclose herein the final report of the Health and Institutional Services Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter W. Hichens

Walter W. Hichens
Senate Chairman

Harland C. Goodwin, Jr.

Harland C. Goodwin, Jr.
House Chairman

enclosures
BC/sym

The
study:

During the Regular Session of the 107th Legislature a joint order was passed directing the Legislative Council "to study the distribution of social service funds, including the organization of such services, state financial assistance of such community based services, [and] the organizational and functional inter-relationships of community agencies receiving state financial assistance." The Legislative Council assigned this study to the Health and Institutional Services Committee.

Although the Committee initiated its study prior to the Special Session by meeting with representatives of the Bureau of Resource Development in the Department of Health & Welfare, the Maine Human Services Council and the Maine Municipal Association, the Committee's primary work during this period was directed to a study of services for mentally retarded persons, in connection with which it subsequently recommended major legislation. As a result of these preliminary meetings, however, the Committee did identify several areas of concern which could be addressed in another phase of the study. These areas included the geographic distribution of social service funds, the eligibility requirements for recipients of specific social services, the payment mechanism for services delivered and the amount of Federal social service funds for which the State was eligible.

As a result of action during the Special Session, the Committee was assigned the study of the administration of medication. Because this study required immediate Committee attention and specific legislation or other recommendations, it claimed the major share of the Committee's time. In addi-

tion, when the social services study was resumed following the Special Session, the Committee had become aware of studies of social services being carried out by two other groups, the Maine Human Services Council (MHSC) and the Children and Youth Services Planning Project (CYSPP). The CYSPP was created early in 1975 and will be presenting its report to the 108th Legislature early in the Regular Session. The Maine Human Services Council has been studying the social services funded by Title XX, of the Social Security Amendments since January of this year and will be issuing its final report and recommendations within the next month.

Through discussions with representatives of both groups the Committee learned that the areas of concern which it had identified during its 1975 meetings had also been singled out for study and recommendations by both the MHSC and CYSPP. To avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts, the Committee will, therefore, direct the Legislature's attention to the recommendations of the MHSC and the soon to be published report of the CYSPP.

We would specifically emphasize the 4 areas earlier identified by the Committee.

Geographic
distribution:

The Priority Social Services Program (22 MRSA § 6105 ff) provides that certain listed social services shall be offered to residents of Maine "with an emphasis on the development of human services in rural areas". The language establishing that services in rural areas should be emphasized was added in an amendment in 1975. The Committee is not persuaded that any significant change in the geographic distribution of social

services has occurred as the result of this amendment.

Eligibility
requirements:

The priority social services program was developed in part at least to avoid the rigid categorical eligibility requirements of other social services programs. By using broader category definitions and different income guidelines the PSPP program has enabled some persons who are ineligible for Federal programs to qualify for needed social services. The Committee nevertheless believes that more individuals ought to be eligible for social services. By basing eligibility on need and establishing a fee schedule for the persons who can pay a portion of or the full cost of services, the State can provide better delivery of services to all those who need them.

Fee for
services:

In meetings with representatives of the Bureau of Resource Development in 1975, the Committee urged the adoption of a sliding-scale of fees for social services after pointing out the unnecessary hardship caused by the absence of such a mechanism. The Committee was told that the development of this payment mechanism was considered important by the Bureau and was assured that it would be ready for at least the high cost services by July 1, 1976. The fee-for-service approach has not yet been implemented for any social services and, as a result, some individuals needing services are effectively barred from receiving them.

Expenditure
of Title
XX funds:

Maine is eligible for 12.25 million dollars in Federal matching funds under the provisions of Title XX of the Social Security Amendments. To generate these funds slightly more than 4 million dollars must be made available from non-Federal sources including State appropriations, local government appropriations and private agency funds. The Department of Human Services has consistently taken the position that the State has been spending the maximum available funds under Title XX and has turned down grant applications on the basis of this position. The Committee believes that the State may have fallen several million dollars short of using the maximum funds available and would urge the Department to make an immediate and thorough study of all expenditures under this program during the last two years.

Action
by the
108th
Legisla-
ture:

The 108th Legislature will be receiving reports relating to social services from several groups early in 1977. The Committee believes that to effectively become informed about not only the 4 areas just described but also the numerous other issues raised in these reports, the Legislature should direct the Health and Institutional Services Committee to hold a series of informational meetings with each of the reporting groups and other interested parties early in the legislative session. These meetings will enable the new committee to become familiar with the complex administrative and funding relationships through which social services are delivered. In addition, committee members will also become better able to assess the need for the continuation, expansion or reduction in the level of each service.

Substantial amounts of State and Federal money are spent annually on social services throughout the State. More significantly, however, these services provide for many Maine citizens the difference between maintaining a job and unemployment, between family stability and the break-up of a home and, in general, between mere survival and the opportunity for a measure of independence and enrichment in everyday life. In the past the State has often reviewed social services only in a fragmentary way and usually in the context of some crisis. The Committee believes that a comprehensive review of these services is needed and that the several reports which will be presented to the 108th Legislature provide the opportunity and sound basis for such a review.

APPENDIX A

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STATE OF MAINE

Leg. Council
~~J. R. ...~~
H. S.

In Senate February 11, 1975.....

~~Ordered~~

Whereas, the Legislature believes that quality social services should be fairly and equitably available to improve the well-being of Maine citizens; and

Whereas, services in the areas of alcoholism and drug abuse prevention, mental health, rehabilitation, mental retardation, senior citizens and priority social services often provide similar or overlapping benefits to individuals; and

Whereas, the organization of state government agencies and the state financial assistance for such community based services is uncoordinated; now, therefore, be it

Ordered, the House concurring, that the Legislative Council study the distribution of social service funds, including the organization of state agencies responsible for administration of such services, state financial assistance of such community based services, the organizational and functional interrelationships of community agencies receiving state financial assistance and such related matters as the Committee may deem appropriate and present its findings and recommendations, including any necessary legislation, to the next special or regular session of the Legislature; and be it further

Ordered, that the state departments and state agencies responsible for administration of such services are respectfully directed to cooperate with the Committee and to provide such technical and other

D. OF R.

assistance as the Committee deems necessary or desirable to carry out the purposes of this Order, including, but not limited to, personnel and staff as a part of their regular employment without additional appropriation; and be it further

Ordered, upon final passage, that copies of this Order be transmitted forthwith to state departments and agencies as notice of this directive.

IN SENATE CHAMBER
TABLED BY SEN. SPEERS
OF KENNEBEC

Lead

FEB 11 1975

PENDING *Passage*

HARRY N. STARBRANCH, Secretary

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Speaker laid before the House and

on Motion of Mr. Roller
of York

MAR 12 1975

TABLED PENDING

adoption of Sen amend #1

SENATE AMENDMENT

A ADOPTED

Passed as amend. by Senate amend. *A*

SENT DOWN FOR CONCURRENCE

Janyz. H. H. H.

SECRETARY

Hayes & Gahagan

(Gahagan)
NAME:

COUNTY: Aroostook

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

On Motion of Mr. Roller

of York

MAR 11 1975

Tabled Pending *adoption of*

Sen Amend #1

SP 180

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

On Motion of Mr. Roller

of York

MAR 4 1975

Tabled Pending *adoption of*

Sen amend #1

Edwin C. ...

SPECIALLY ASSIGNED FOR

Mar 6

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Speaker laid before the House and

on Motion of Mr. Roller

of York

TABLED
MAR 6 1975

Pending adoption of Senate Amend #1

Edwin C. ...

SPECIALLY ASSIGNED FOR *Mar 11, 1975*