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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Ezzell ORIGINAL DATE 02/03/10
LAST UPDATED _____ HB 249
SHORT TITLE CYFD Autism Services SB _____
ANALYST Peery-Galon

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY10	FY11		
	\$25.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Development Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC)
Department of Health (DOH)
Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

No Responses Received From

Governor's Commission on Disability
Public Education Department

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 249 appropriates \$25.0 from the general fund to the Children, Youth and Families Department for expenditure in FY10, and subsequent fiscal years, to contract with a community-based organization in Dexter to increase social interactions for children and young adults with autism spectrum disorders and to provide training to staff and caregivers of participating children.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$25.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2010 shall not revert to the General Fund.

CYFD noted the appropriation was not included in the Executive recommendation.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

CYFD stated the proposed legislation allows for provisions of services specific to children and young adults with autism spectrum disorder. Additionally, the proposed legislation calls for training for staff and caregivers of the participating children. Services statewide for those with autism spectrum disorder are limited and generally found in the larger metropolitan areas. This is a significant resource for a rural community to offer its members.

CYFD noted that according to Autism Society of America, October 5, 2009 report, “What is Autism? Facts and Stats”:

- one percent of the population of children in the U.S. ages 3-17 have an autism spectrum disorder,
- prevalence is estimated at 1 in 110 births,
- one to 1.5 million Americans live with an autism spectrum disorder,
- autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability, with a 10 to 17 percent annual growth of afflicted population,
- \$60 billion annual cost,
- sixty percent of costs are in adult services, and
- cost of lifelong care can be reduced by 2/3 with early diagnosis and intervention.

DOH reported it currently contracts for approximately \$2.7 million with a variety of organizations to provide similar services to children and youth with autism spectrum disorders and to provide training and technical assistance to parents of those children. It would be important for the community-based contractor to coordinate services with other autism spectrum disorder services funded through DOH and Human Services Department to prevent duplication or fragmentation of efforts in the Dexter area and assure that training content is consistent.

DDPC noted that frequently children and youth with autism spectrum disorders are penalized for behaviors related to their disabilities. In the case of youth diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, the families are often ill-prepared to manage these behaviors and the youth may come to the attention of the court system.

DDPC reported that adequate training programs do not exist for professionals to provide effective services to children and youth with autism spectrum disorders. Children and youth diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders are lumped in with other children diagnosed with other disabilities, resulting in high frustration levels for professionals and children alike. The interventions provided are not effective resulting in further developmental delays and lost opportunities to progress with peers. By the time the student reaches high school, transition services should be in place, but there is inadequate expertise to guide them on to adult responsibilities, employment and independent living, resulting in higher costs to the state. The personal care costs increase exponentially as the student matures, because services failed to be provided at the early developmental stages.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

CYFD reported the department has no performance measures relating to this population.

DOH reported the proposed legislation relates to the department’s strategic plan FY11:

individual objective 7 to ensure quality developmental disabilities services and improve outcomes for New Mexicans with developmental disabilities.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

CYFD stated the department would absorb contract administration associated with this proposed legislation through existing resources.

DDPC noted that CYFD may need to include autism spectrum disorder specialists in order to implement family service plans that involve children and youth diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

DDPC reported youth with autism spectrum disorders are misdiagnosed nearly 20 percent of the time, with emotional disorders or even mental illnesses. A study conducted in 1993 showed that nearly 75 percent of the diagnoses come from professionals who are not trained in ASD, such as a case manager or hospital clinic, perhaps because there are simply not enough trained professionals to diagnose the condition. DDPC noted that not much has changed since then with some children with autism spectrum disorders inappropriately placed in behaviorally disordered foster care, or among students with mental retardation or who are profoundly disabled, due to inadequate training by professional service providers. DDPC stated there are simply insufficient programs available to address the needs of children with autism spectrum disorders in New Mexico. These inappropriate placements add to the cycle of abuse and neglect of children with disabilities.

ALTERNATIVES

DDPC noted that CYFD may collaborate with the University of New Mexico's Center for Development and Disability in order to conduct assessments.

RPG/mew