



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

Fast Facts:
2015 Legislative Session

2016-17 human services budget strengthens mental health and protects kids

The 2016-17 human services budget makes significant investments in high priority areas, particularly strengthening services for those experiencing mental illness and the safety and wellbeing of children. It also preserves MinnesotaCare. Other important initiatives include fighting the spread of opiates, keeping health care accessible and affordable, increasing and reforming nursing facility payments to focus more on quality and program integrity enhancements to make sure public dollars are going to those that need them.

Strengthening Minnesota's mental health system

In 2014, DHS staff traveled the state to hear from individuals touched by mental illness, their families, mental health providers, counties and community members about Minnesota's mental health system. What they found was a mental health infrastructure with many bright spots but which is still filled with too many gaps and is unable to serve all those in need of care. These gaps were even more pronounced in Greater Minnesota.

In response to this situation the governor and Legislature made an historic investment in Minnesota's mental health system in the 2015 legislative session. This included additional resources for community-based services to care for people with the most intensive needs, additional beds for those needing a hospital-level of care and more safe and affordable housing with supports for supporting people with mental illness. In particular great strides were made in children's mental health, with critical investments in services to reach kids earlier and in the places where they can access help easiest, like schools. (*\$46 million in net state investment*)

Providing children with a safe place to learn and grow

Over the past decade the number of children living in poverty has increased by more than 50 percent. Today over 325,000 Minnesota children are living below the federal poverty level, including over 70,000 who are in deep poverty. Too often, these living conditions lead to poor academic performance, mental and physical health problems, involvement in the criminal justice system and premature death.

In the 2015 legislative session the governor and Legislature made important investments to help make these children's lives better, including crucial reforms and investments in our child protection system, increased access to affordable child care and additional funding for homeless and sexually exploited youth. (*\$76.5 million in net state investment*)

Fighting the spread of opioids

Minnesota is seeing a worrisome rise in the use of prescription opioid pain medication and heroin. The consequences of ample availability of opioids include increased incidents in opioid addiction, prenatal exposure resulting in babies being born with adverse health effects, and

overdose and deaths resulting from opioid overdoses. In the 2015 legislative session the governor and Legislature took action to reduce the spread of opiates by enhancing care for pregnant women addicted to opiates and promoting participation by prescribers and pharmacists in the Prescription Monitoring Program and training for physicians on addiction, prescribing opiates and alternative approaches to pain management. Minnesota is also expanding the number of Minnesotans on public programs needing to be monitored for abusive prescription behavior. *(\$290,000 in net state savings)*

Keeping health care affordable and accessible

For decades Minnesota has been a leader in providing innovative and world-class health care to its residents, and in 2013 we took another leap forward by expanding affordable care to more than 300,000 Minnesotans. This achievement cut the number of uninsured Minnesotans by half and achieved the highest number of Minnesotans ever having health coverage.

In the 2015 legislative session Minnesota sustained this progress by preserving its MinnesotaCare program and making other key investments that will make health care more accessible and affordable for thousands of Minnesotans. These investments include reducing premiums for employees with disabilities on Medical Assistance (MA), allowing seniors and people with disabilities to retain more of their income before becoming MA eligible, increasing payment for dentists in Greater Minnesota and ensuring that hospitals across Minnesota have the state support they need to provide quality care to their communities.

Additionally a task force on health care financing was established to consider the next steps in health care reform in Minnesota. This bipartisan task force will evaluate new opportunities for Minnesota's publicly funded health care programs and help set the stage for the next series of improvements to Minnesota's health care system. *(\$73.2 million in net state reductions)*

Promoting innovation in long-term care

The country is experiencing a demographic shift, and by 2020 Minnesota will have more people over age 65 than school-age children. People are living longer and most will need long-term services and supports as they age. This budget continues the great strides of the past four years in our efforts to continue transforming our nation-leading long-term care system. It not only makes a substantial \$138 million investment in nursing home facilities, but just as importantly reforms the payment structure to emphasize quality services. Additionally it provides funding for a home and community based services (HCBS) innovation pool to promote creative service delivery in our HCBS program. *(\$139.7 million in net state investment)*

Protecting taxpayers from fraud in public programs

Minnesota is a national leader in fraud prevention and in 2011 the Department of Human Services (DHS) created the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to even more effectively combat waste and abuse in its human services programs. Since then recoveries in Medical Assistance (just one of the programs the OIG reviews) have increased 800 percent from \$878,000 in 2011 to \$7.2 million in 2014. The 2015 legislative session continued this work by increasing our ability to make sure services are appropriately provided and strengthening our ability to recover funds. *(\$70,000 in net state savings)*

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