



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
DIVISION OF ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

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May 13, 2009

SUBJECT: Results of 2009 Legislative Session

Dear Tribal Leaders:

During the 2009 Legislative Session, the Legislature and Governor wrestled with an unprecedented nine billion dollar deficit for the 2009-2011 Biennium. Very substantial cuts were made to virtually all parts of state government, K-12 education, and institutions of higher education, with some of the deficit filled in with funds from the federal stimulus package.

The Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) fared relatively well in the budget and legislative process. Time and again, legislators expressed their continuing confidence in the work undertaken by the substance abuse field. Many felt called upon to express their support for funding alcohol and drug treatment to improve public health and safety, reduce medical and psychiatric costs, and lower crime, criminal justice, and incarceration costs in these difficult times. They emphasized that providing quality chemical dependency treatment services was a way to control spending in other parts of the state budget. This is a tribute to the fine work being done by our providers, counties, and tribes in supporting individuals in their recovery from the disease of chemical dependency.

DASA Budget

Reduction in Funding for Low-Income Residential, Outpatient, and Detoxification Services - \$12,382,000 was reduced from DASA's budget for low-income services. In the coming weeks, DASA will decide how to apportion these reductions.

Reduction in Drug Court Support - \$2,087,000 was removed from DASA's budget for support of drug courts. Additional Byrne Grant funding became available under the federal stimulus package to fully replace state drug court support.

Budget language specifically requires DASA to continue to provide chemical dependency treatment services for adults eligible for Medicaid and those receiving General Assistance-Unemployable (GA-U) who are in need of it. In addition, DASA may contract with the University of Washington and community-based providers for the Parent-Child Assistance Program.

Reduction in DASA Administration - \$1,074,000 was reduced from DASA's budget for administration, including new hiring, out-of-state travel, personal service contracts, and equipment purchases not related to public safety or other essential activities. An additional \$2,376,000 was removed from DASA's budget as a continuation of the Governor's directed 1% cut initiated in October 2008. 6.6 FTEs are eliminated.

Other Budget Items of Interest

Elimination of Funding for Chemical Dependency Professionals (CDPs) in Community Service Offices (CSOs) - \$3,000,000 was reduced from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Economic Services Administration (ESA) budget that had paid for CDPs to be stationed at CSOs around the state. Referrals for assessment and treatment will now be made by existing CSO staff.

Reduction in Funding for CDPs to Work with the DSHS Children's Administration, Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) - \$2,476,000 was removed from the DCFS budget, reducing the number of CDPs working with DCFS for assessment and treatment referral to eight.

Reduction in Department of Corrections (DOC) Funding as a Result of Increase in Treatment Beds for Those Sentenced Under the Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative (DOSA) – The number of chemical dependency residential treatment beds for those sentenced under DOSA was increased by 115, and DOC funding was reduced by \$3,434,000 to reflect expected savings.

Reduction in Funding for the Family Policy Council (FPC) - \$3,847,000 was removed from the FPC budget and its associated grant programs with the Community Public Health and Safety Networks. Problems addressed by FPC and the Networks include: child abuse and neglect, youth substance abuse, youth violence, domestic violence, youth suicide, teen pregnancy and male parentage, dropping out of school, and child out-of-home placements.

Budget language requires Economic Services Administration (ESA) to intensively evaluate GA-U clients who have received benefits for 12 months or more if the evidence indicates clients' medical or incapacity-related condition makes it unlikely they will meet the disability standard for federal Supplementary Security Income benefits. The evaluation shall identify services needed to minimize or eliminate barriers to employment, including mental health and substance abuse treatment, and vocational rehabilitation services. ESA is required to expedite referrals to these services.

State Department of Health – Tobacco Prevention and Control Program: Funding was reduced from \$52 million to \$30 million.

Policy Changes

Engrossed SHB 1991 – Relating to Drug Court Funding - 10% of Criminal Justice Treatment Account funds may be spent on the court administration and operating costs.

Engrossed SHB 2341 – Relating to Changes in the Basic Health Plan (BHP) Program Necessary to Implement the 2009-2011 Operating Budget – This legislation eliminated the limitation on chemical dependency services, mental health services, and organ transplant services to a combined maximum value of 5% of the BHP benefit package. At the same time, the budget bill reduced the number of individuals enrolled by the subsidized BHP by 40,000.

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Engrossed SB 5995 - Relating to Eliminating Certain Boards, Committees, and Commissions and the Transfer of Certain Duties Effective June 30, 2009 – Throughout the Legislative Session, the Governor's government reform efforts called for the elimination of some 200 boards, committees, and commissions during the 2009-2011 Biennium. Included among those slated for elimination was the Citizens Advisory Council on Alcoholism and Drug Addiction (CAC). The final bill, as adopted, does *not* mark the CAC for elimination.

Other Action

In February, the Governor, by executive order, eliminated the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse (GCOSA). Established in 1994, GCOSA was created to respond to the significant human, social, and economic costs substance abuse inflicts on individuals, families, and communities in Washington State.

As budget decisions are made, we will do our best to notify those who will be directly affected and provide updated budget information on the DASA website.

Thank you for your continued dedication to providing quality prevention, intervention, treatment and aftercare services to people in need during a challenging time of reduced resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David A. Dickinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "D".

David A. Dickinson, M.A., Director
Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse