

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE

February 10, 2022

3:17 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Liz Snyder, Co-Chair
Representative Tiffany Zulkosky, Co-Chair
Representative Zack Fields
Representative Ken McCarty
Representative Mike Prax

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Ivy Spohnholz
Representative Christopher Kurka

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW: EXECUTIVE ORDER 121: DHSS REORGANIZATION

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

ADAM CRUM, Commissioner
Department of Health and Social Services
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the overview on Executive Order 121.

SYLVAN ROBB, Assistant Commissioner
Department of Health and Social Services
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to questions during the overview on Executive Order 121.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:17:23 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR LIZ SNYDER called the House Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:17 p.m. Representatives Snyder, Zulkosky, Fields, McCarty, and Prax were present at the call to order.

OVERVIEW: Executive Order 121: DHSS Reorganization

[3:18:13 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR SNYDER announced that the only order of business would be an Overview of Executive Order 121: DHSS Reorganization.

[3:19:49 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS asked whether the Department of Health and Social Services had filled the childcare program office director position.

[3:20:05 PM](#)

ADAM CRUM, Commissioner, Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), responded that the opening was posted and recruitment is ongoing.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS commented on the importance of the childcare sector and noted the difficulty in recruitment during the pandemic. He asked Commissioner Crum about wage premiums dispersed by the System for Early Education Development (SEED).

COMMISSIONER CRUM asked whether Representative Fields was referring to "thread," which he noted has been a partner. He said that he would have to get back to Representative Fields with more specific information.

[3:21:40 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS shared his understanding that there are outstanding funds, and he said he would appreciate Commissioner Crum's examination of the remaining funds.

[3:22:47 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY asked Commissioner Crum whether the department is assessing the ancillary costs of the transition as they relate to non-personnel costs.

COMMISSIONER CRUM deferred to Sylvan Robb.

[3:24:01 PM](#)

SYLVAN ROBB, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Health and Social Services, responded that the department is in the process of going through that. There may be some additional outstanding costs related to information technology (IT). There are several applications that the department uses, and most are easily attributable to each department, but there are some systems that are shared that possibly necessitate additional licensing.

[3:25:06 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR ZULKOSKY asked what the timeline is for that assessment.

MS. ROBB responded that IT is anticipated to have the longest "runway." She explained that there are some elements of the process of IT that are quite enmeshed, such as data centers. She voiced her belief that some of the work would not be completed by July 1 and that the department will assess what the cost implications of the split will be.

[3:26:12 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR SNYDER noted the composition of the boards was addressed in the reworking of Executive Order (EO) 121. She asked if the testifiers could speak to the decision process of selecting each commissioner.

[3:27:44 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER CRUM responded that the Department of Law (DOL) looked at the ways in which the functions would align with the existing boards.

[3:28:31 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR SNYDER asked about the process of creating agreements and memorandums and the time involved in doing so.

MS. ROBB responded that there are no costs associated with creating the agreements beyond labor hours. She remarked on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

CO-CHAIR SNYDER proffered there is a template for the agreement; the entire department is covered by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

[3:30:39 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER CRUM said the department does not see the steps required as being a hurdle but rather just "a changing of the letterhead" and "getting new signatures."

CO-CHAIR SNYDER asked if it requires approvals at the federal level.

COMMISSIONER CRUM answered no.

[3:31:36 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY noted that there may be two departments doing similar things and having similar clientele. He asked whether return on investment (ROI) would be required for each situation or whether it could be just one ROI through the memorandum of understanding (MOU).

COMMISSIONER CRUM responded that the MOUs for the departments would not require ROIs.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY asked whether there's a plan for informed consent so that clients would know that this is happening.

COMMISSIONER CRUM said he would confirm in writing to Representative McCarty.

[3:33:33 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:33 p.m.