

DCF LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



3/23/2021

TESTIMONY OF

Chrisy, Khatib

Kansas Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON

HB 2151

Chair

Hilderbrand

Vice Chair

Gossage

Ranking Member

Petty

and

Members of the Committee

SUMMARY OF ISSUE & DCF POSITION

House Bill 2151 proposes the creation of a Kansas elder and dependent adult abuse multidisciplinary team coordinator in the Attorney General's office. This coordinator would be responsible for facilitating and convening elder and dependent abuse multidisciplinary teams in each judicial district across the state.

DCF supports HB 2151 as the creation of elder and dependent adult abuse multidisciplinary teams allows for increased collaboration and coordination in adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation investigations, leading to better services for Kansas seniors and dependent adults.

CONTEXT & HISTORY

DCF administers the state's Adult Protective Services (APS) program. The APS program protects adults 18 years or older alleged to be unable to protect their own interests. APS investigators receive and respond to reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults via the Kansas Protection Report Center. If needed, APS provides protective services to clients by building connections with family members, referring to community professionals, and providing preventative services.

Currently, there are no statewide efforts to create multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) for elder and dependent adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation investigations.

The goal of elder and dependent abuse MDTs will be to improve service delivery related to adult abuse investigations and services. MDTs bring together experts from different professions to coordinate investigations, review cases, and address systemic problems revealed by those reviews.

Adult and dependent adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation investigations are often complex and can involve multiple types of potential abuses. Bringing together professionals of different disciplines widens the group's knowledge. The enhanced collaboration and communication that comes from these teams can lead to innovations and will be a tool to help investigators navigate complex cases.

HB 2151 requires the following entities have representation on each judicial district's MDT:

- The sheriff of each county within the district
- The county or district attorney of each county within the district
- The Department for Children and Families
- The Department for Aging and Disability Services
- The State Long-term Care Ombudsman

Medical providers, legal services providers, housing providers, financial services providers, and others may also be represented on the teams if available.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION

Should House Bill 2151 become law, DCF will be represented on each judicial district's MDT. This will allow DCF APS staff to build relationships and collaborate with the other stakeholders on the teams, enhancing the resources available to staff to solve complex cases.

Ultimately, HB 2151 will lead to enhanced collaboration among stakeholders and better services for seniors and dependent adults in Kansas. Through the regular review of cases, MDTs can identify and address systemic issues that present barriers to service delivery. MDTs will also provide an avenue for stakeholders to develop new practices and innovations that can be applied across the state. Additionally, localizing teams by judicial districts allow for local level issues to be addressed in a timely manner.

FISCAL IMPACT OF LEGISLATION

DCF does not anticipate any fiscal impact from House Bill 2151. APS staff would participate in the MDTs using existing resources and positions.

DCF POSITION

DCF stands in support of House Bill 2151 as it will enhance collaboration among stakeholders and lead to better services for Kansas seniors and dependent adults. DCF is committed to protecting vulnerable adults through the APS program and looks forward to participating in the MDTs in the coming years.