

South Dakota Board of Social Services Meeting

Draft Minutes

Friday, May 30, 2025

Video Conference

Kneip Building, 1st Floor, DSS Conference Room
700 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501

Board Members Present: Howard Grinager, Stacy Tieszen, and Colleen Winter

Board Members Absent: Karen Michels and Elton Blemaster

Presenters: Heather Petermann, Division Director Medical Services

DSS Staff: Matt Althoff, Cabinet Secretary; Brenda Tidball-Zeltinger, Deputy Secretary and Chief of Operations; Emily Richard, Director of Communications and Administrative Services; Tracy Mercer-O'Daniel, Special Projects Coordinator.

Guests: Bob Mercer, Keloland News; Makenzie Huber, SD Search Light; Lee Strubinger, SD Public Broadcasting; Melissa McCauley; Ben Hanson, American Cancer Society; and Eric Nelson

Call to Order, Roll, and Declaration of a Quorum: Chair Winter called the roll and, with two members absent, declared a quorum was not met, but meeting is informational only and no action will be taken.

Medicaid & Community Engagement: Althoff stated to honor the will of SD voters that there should be a work component for Medicaid, we took it upon ourselves to create a plan that would be successful and a resource rather than a mechanism for regulatory enforcement. He added that work is a component in most DSS programs. Althoff explained that Congress is also actively considering adding work requirements for the Medicaid expansion population as part of the budget reconciliation bill, but until that bill is passed there is no way to know the final details until the law is fully adopted. He asked for feedback on the drafted DSS plan.

Petermann presented the DSS Medicaid Work Component plan. The requirement focuses on work and education, not paperwork. This recognizes that most people want to work as much as they can to support themselves and their family. Existing data indicates that approximately 80 percent of the expansion population already meet the program requirements or a stated exemption. Differences in the State suggested plan and the Federal Plan include timing of requirements. Federal is every six months state is annual. Differences in tracking are the federal plan requires an 80 hour minimum and allows community service to count toward hours. The State plan simplifies either working/going to school or not.

Althoff asked if there was anything that gave the Board pause. Winter asked about the administrative costs of the monitoring. Petermann said that we do anticipate that there will be costs to system updates to do verifications. At this point we do not know the costs. We did everything possible to approach this in a way to keep administrative costs at a minimum. Althoff added that this would need to be done within the existing budget.

Winter asked if there is a period of grace to find work? Petermann said it is still speculative since legislation hasn't been finalized, but the current draft does have it as expectation to receive Medicaid.

Grinager appreciates the approach DSS has taken in that we want people to work because work has a beneficial effect on people's lives. It is not a requirement just for a requirement sake.

Public Comment – Mackenzie Huber with SD Searchlight, asked would there be additional administrative costs of the federal proposal. Althoff said that we are actively monitoring it. Short answer yes, there is costs to monitor the safety net programs, but with so much still in the air not able to put numbers on it at this time. Huber asked if it impact IHS patients. Petermann said that we approached the requirements consistently if there is an area with high unemployment, we did not call out or exclude Native Americans we want the dignity and pride to apply to everyone.

Ben Hansen, American Cancer Society, - If the feds put out work requirements will the State still submit? Althoff said that there is nothing pre-scripted at this point we will monitor aggressively.

Lee Strubinger, SD Public Broadcasting, asked if the waiver that SD has put together is stricter would the fed be the baseline, and we would be steps further? Petermann, what we do know is that proposals submitted by States need to be approved. Until we know what language is included, we don't know for sure we have to stay in contact with our CMS officers.

Future Items/ Next Meeting Date – October 21, 2025

Grinager asks how much DSS have to do with rural health care? Althoff indicated that rural healthcare providers are essential. He described measures taken to stretch available dollars so that providers can be paid as much as possible and as much as the DSS budget can afford. Make sure there are lines of communication open and examining methodology to make sure persons enrolled in Medicaid have access. Winter commented our state has a concern about infant mortality, so the concern is on the radar of many of state departments. Althoff referenced the collective effort across State agencies that is aimed toward addressing this very concern.

Board Vacancies – Althoff asked the Board for recommendations for the vacant positions.

Meeting Adjourn -9:58 a.m.