

Adeline Hambley

From: Adeline Hambley
Sent: Monday, October 9, 2023 10:15 PM
To: Rebekah Curran
Subject: FY2024 Public Health Budget & Minimum Mandates Follow-up

Commissioner Curran,

I wanted to follow-up with a brief recap of our conversation tonight regarding the fiscal year 2024 budget for Public Health. Per your question regarding funding for mandated services meeting minimum levels as required by the state, there are a few items that keep the answer from being a simple yes or no.

1. Essential Local Public Health Services (ELPHS) block grant funding to local public health jurisdictions was approved in the state budget to increase \$25 million. However, the amount awarded to each jurisdiction has not yet been provided. \$485,000 was estimated as the increase used in the Ottawa County Dept. of Public Health (OCDPH) budget. This amount should allow for the minimum funding/service level for ELPHS programs at OCDPH. However, if the actual amount awarded is less than the \$485,000 budgeted, some ELPHS programs would no longer meet the minimum. If that were to happen, the additional funding required would need to be brought before the Board of Commissioners so additional funding from the contingency or general fund could be approved and minimums maintained.
2. The 3rd Epidemiology position is part of the mandated services required by local public health. It was stated in the meeting by Administrator Gibbs that funding has been provided for three epidemiology positions in the FY24 budget. This is not the case. Karen confirmed with me that there is no funding in the Public Health Administration line, leaving this third position unfunded. At this time, because there is no funding for it within administration or our communicable disease program, the third epidemiology position is being reassigned to provide analysis and support to environmental health, and funding will come from the food safety program and the well & septic program.
3. Health Education & Nutrition are mandated services, but minimum service levels are not as clear for these programs. However, the services provided are to address identified community needs. The 48% reduction in funding will lead to reduced hours at outer offices (Hudsonville and/or Grand Haven) to reduce costs and maintain services as best we can. As the details are still being worked out, I am unable to outline the full impact at this time.
4. A knowledgeable and experienced Health Officer is a necessity to navigate the complexity of the funding sources and various requirements for local public health. There is significant liability to the County and to the Board for failure to meet the substantial and varied legal requirements of the Health Officer and the local health department. In addition, having a knowledgeable and experienced Health Officer helps a Board avoid landmines like potentially cutting the family planning program to the point where the County would have lost its Title X funding and allowed Planned Parenthood to take over as the recipient of that Title X grant.

I hope this helps to summarize the items we discussed earlier. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any additional questions.

Thank you,

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