

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Subcommittee B**

2012- 2013 Interims

SENATE MEMBERS

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**Final Report of
SUBCOMMITTEE B OF THE
JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH**

Subcommittee B was appointed at the request of the Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Health by a letter dated July 11, 2011, to the leadership of both the Senate and the House of Delegates following the conclusion of the 2010 Regular Session of the 79th Legislature. A copy of that letter with approval by the Speaker of the House of Delegates and the President of the

Senate is attached to this final report.

The Subcommittee was assigned the following specific topics or resolutions for study during the 2012-2013 interim period:

HCR 132 -Requesting the Committee on Government and Finance to study the feasibility of developing a state pilot program for school age expectant mothers.

SCR 60 - Requesting Joint Committee on Government and Finance study compilation of birth parents' nonidentifying social and medical histories prior to adoption.

During the course of the 2012 - 2013 interim period, the Subcommittee met and received information on topics of study regarding important issues related to the topics that were assigned to the subcommittee for study. Presentations were made and information was received from state agencies, the medical community, advocacy groups and other pertinent sources. The Committee **REPORTS** as follows:

**HCR 132 -Requesting the Committee on Government and Finance
to study the feasibility of developing a state pilot program for
school age expectant mothers.**

The majority of the Subcommittee's time during this interim period focused on this issue. The Subcommittee began its work by hearing from David Jude, M.D. Doctor Jude is the Chair of

the Department of OB-GYN at the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine at Marshall University. Doctor Jude set the stage by giving the Subcommittee an overview of the statistical data from the Center for Disease Control that showed that West Virginia was the only state with an increase in teen pregnancy between 2007 and 2009. He then honed his presentation down to give greater detail on a county by county basis, on birth rates by ethnicity and discussed sexual activity in West Virginia teens. Doctor Jude then showed a correlation with education and ended with a discussion of the cost to the state of teen pregnancy. He also offered some thoughts on our infant mortality rate which is also higher than the national average.

The Subcommittee also heard from Denise Smith, MS, MCHES who is the Director of Perinatal and Women's Health within the Office of Maternal Child and Family Health at the Department of Health and Human Resources. Ms. Smith bolstered the information offered by Doctor Jude and offered her insight into what the state was doing to curb teen pregnancy.

The lead school nurse for Kanawha County also addressed the Subcommittee on this issue. Brenda Issac, RN, BSN, MA, NCSN. Ms. Issac discussed a program started in the late '60's in Kanawha County regarding teen pregnancy. The program was geared to at risk school age girls to facilitate their education while pregnant. She also made the Subcommittee aware of the Chandler Academy. This is a combined alternative school for middle and high school students at the former Chandler Elementary School campus located on the west side of Charleston. The countywide expectant mothers program is housed on the Chandler campus. It was moved from its former home at Garnet Career Center. There is a move to obtain funding to provide a day care center on the campus.

The Subcommittee also heard about statewide efforts on dealing with school age pregnant

mothers by the Department of Education. Cybele Bohem and Mary Weikle, Coordinators of the Office of Healthy Schools within the Department of Education provided the Subcommittee with background information on various efforts on the state level and specific county efforts that are geared to making education available to pregnant teens and new mothers. They also discussed getting the fathers involved where possible.

Finally, the Subcommittee heard from Kelli Caseman, Executive Director of the West Virginia School Board Health Assembly. Ms. Caseman offered her perspective on the teen pregnancy issue and offered some thoughts on the issue. She was supported by Pamela Dice a retired school nurse. They suggested the need for an increased number of social workers in schools. They further urged a common and statewide approach to sex education in health classes in schools and encouraged pregnancy prevention discussions to be held in school based health clinics including available birth control. They further suggested a unified approach between the Department of Health and Human Resources and the Department of Education that would develop a coordinated approach with a budget, specified goals, identification of necessary partners and some means of determining success through the setting of benchmarks.

Following this presentation, Subcommittee makes **NO RECOMMENDATION** with respect to the passage of any legislation during the 2013 Regular Session of the Legislature. They do, however, wish to encourage a continued collaborative effort between the Department of Health and Human Resources and the Department of Education. They also want to encourage the continuation of programs such as the one currently underway in Kanawha County. Finally, the Subcommittee **RECOMMENDS** that this issue be continued for further study and evaluation during the 2013-2014

interim period.

SCR 60 - Requesting Joint Committee on Government and Finance

study compilation of birth parents' nonidentifying

social and medical histories prior to adoption.

To meet its obligation with respect to this resolution, the Subcommittee heard from four (4) speakers from the Department of Health and Human Resources with some expertise on adoption services offered by the Department. Nancy Exline, Deputy Commissioner of Field Operations for the Bureau for Children and Families within the Department of Health and Human Resources appeared before the Subcommittee to discuss staffing levels and vacancies with regard to adoption services offered by the Department. She was joined by Patty Vincent, Program manager from Region I and Mary Rosanna, Adoption Supervisor, Region I. Ms. Vincent and Ms. Rosanna discussed in detail the types of services which are offered. They discussed the total number of children currently in the process of being adopted. They also gave some detail to how the process works and discussed state and federal funding levels. Doug Robinson, Acting Commissioner from the Bureau for Children and Families within the Department of Health and Human Resources also addressed the Subcommittee on this issue.

Following this discussion, the Subcommittee makes **NO RECOMMENDATION** with regard to this resolution.

MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

Finally, the Subcommittee heard from Marian L. Swinker, M.D., Commissioner of the Bureau for Public Health within the Department of Health and Human Resources. Doctor Swinker also serves as the State Health Officer. The purpose of her appearance was to discuss the states role in disaster response. She spoke specifically about the manner in which the state responded to the horrendous storm which most of the state experienced in June of 2012. She discussed the role which the state plays in responding to the needs of citizens following such a disaster. She also addressed the areas where the state's response were deficient.

The Committee also heard from Stefan Maxwell, M.D. Doctor Maxwell is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Director of Newborn ICU at Charleston Area Medical Center, Women's and Children's Hospital. He gave the Subcommittee an informative discussion regarding the problem of children who are born in West Virginia to mothers who are substance abusers during pregnancy. He provided the Subcommittee with statistical information, gave an in-depth analysis of the problem and offered some solutions.

Following these presentations the Subcommittee makes **NO RECOMMENDATION** with respect to these issues.

Respectfully submitted:

Senator William R. Laird, IV

Co-Chair

Delegate Barbara Hatfield

Co-Chair