

# State-County Results Accountability & Service Delivery Redesign

**M**innesota's human services funding and performance systems must be redesigned in order to arrive at effective structural changes and results.

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and the Pawlenty Administration have different proposals for how to implement needed changes in order to achieve a more efficient and effective human services delivery system for the entire state.

The key elements of each proposal are outlined below.

## Key Elements of the Pawlenty Administration's Human Services Reform Proposal:

- ▶ Creates regional human services delivery authorities without specifying the desired outcomes or reforms.
- ▶ Mandates assignment of counties to these authorities without consideration of natural partnerships or identified outcomes.
- ▶ Contains no structural, policy, or systems change in state government to support these local relationships or the desired outcomes.

In short, the administration's proposal sounds like reform when in reality it's merely a superficial reorganization. By itself, this proposal does nothing to encourage innovation, create more effective service delivery, or ensure consistency in human service delivery.

This plan creates big regional human service boxes without actually changing how counties do business with community partners, the state, and each other. ▲

Jim Chrisinger, now a consultant with Public Strategies Group, oversaw a major consolidation when he was a top-level manager in Iowa. He believes, as do a number of other students of consolidation, that *leaders often make the mistake of looking at the move as an end in itself, motivated by the urge to save budget dollars. But if saving money is the sole goal, trouble often follows.* Organizers can easily lose sight of the end-customers and the desired results. *"Moving the boxes around is the last thing you do, not the first thing," he says, "The first thing you have to think about is the results you're trying to produce, and for whom. Most of these reorganizations are done for the perceived reduction in overhead and efficiency, without a real examination of what it is you're trying to do."*

*Coming Together, Breaking Apart*, By Katherine Barrett & Richard Greene, March 2009, *Governing Magazine* ([www.Governing.com](http://www.Governing.com))

## Key Elements of the County Human Services Reform Proposal:

- ▶ Authorizes a variety of service delivery models (*Single and Multi-County, Innovative, Client-Focused, and Results-Oriented*) in order to provide the greatest flexibility and opportunity for providing efficient and effective services.
- ▶ Sets a timetable for the establishment of service delivery authorities: self-organized county collaborations and county partnerships responsible for delivering human services.
- ▶ Requires the negotiation of a three-part agreement (*Service Agreement, Performance Agreement, and Governance Agreement*) between the state and county authorities to deliver services effectively and efficiently.
- ▶ Creates a council that will serve in an advisory capacity to the Minnesota Commissioner of Human Services and provide input on service delivery-based best practices used by each authority.
- ▶ Provides start-up funding to assist in local planning and the extra costs associated with implementation of the service delivery authorities.
- ▶ Creates meaningful and balanced systems change through *Finance Reform, Shared Performance Accountability, and Structural Redesign*. Redesigning only one element without the other two will only cause greater imbalance in our system and will not yield positive results.
- ▶ Creates a process and timeline to develop statewide performance measures and outcomes for essential human services.

In short, AMC's multi-faceted plan will implement real change instead of increasing state government bureaucracy.

The AMC plan is intended to utilize already existing models of community partnerships, build on innovations, and streamline the system to best serve communities, clients, and taxpayers. ▲

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