

**Department of Human Services
Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Budget Analysis**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Health and Human Services Subcommittee
Senator Melony Ghee Griffith
Thursday, January 23, 2020**

**House Appropriations Committee
Health and Social Services Subcommittee
Delegate Kirill Reznik
Friday, February 7, 2020**

Issue #1: DLS recommends restricting funds from DHS and MDH until the departments sign an MOU that will allow for sharing of the Medicaid recipient data so that this data can again be included in the Life After Welfare, Annual Update report. This recommendation is included in the DHS - Administration analysis. (page 18)

Response to Issue: The Department appreciates the importance of having Medicaid data for the Life After Welfare report. DHS is committed to ensuring the appropriate legal documents are in place before the end of this legislative session. DHS therefore respectfully disagrees with the recommendation to restrict funds.

Issue #2: DLS recommends that DLS investigate the factors at play affecting low caseworker retention rates. The committee narrative explaining this recommendation will be included in the DHS - Administration analysis. (page 22)

Response to Issue: With regard to the caseworker retention, DHS has been carefully monitoring and investigating the factors related to caseworker retention, and we will continue to do. Our workers are essential to our mission of assisting and empowering people in economic need, providing preventive services, and protecting vulnerable children and adults. We are focused on creating an environment that attracts workers, and we invest in our workers with training and development to encourage them to remain with the Department. As part of this effort, the Governor's Allowance include a one grade annual salary review (ASR) increase for all social workers. In addition, the Smart/Work student loan repayment program is being expanded to social workers. The Smart/Work program will eliminate up to \$20,000 in debt over ten years.

DHS therefore concurs with the recommendation of the analyst to investigate the factors related to caseworker retention and look forward to discussing this issue further when we have the DLS recommendation at the DHS-Administration hearing.

