

DISCLAIMER

Electronic versions of the exhibits in these minutes may not be complete.

This information is supplied as an informational service only and should not be relied upon as an official record.

Original exhibits are on file at the Legislative Counsel Bureau Research Library in Carson City.

Contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or library@lcb.state.nv.us.

(Mention short notice, parents and staff that showed up to show support and hear budget closing.)

Good morning. My name is Jessi Evans.

I am a Nevada ICC board member representing parents in Southern Nevada.

For 2 ½ years, I've meet weekly with families from both Special Children's Clinic and First Step as well as therapists and other service providers.

They have all discussed their issues and concerns with me regarding the Department of Human Resources' proposal to merger Nevada's early childhood programs into one program along with the Part C office.

The two expectations of the proposed merge was to save money and improve quality of services for Nevada's children with disabilities.

As you can see from the Department of Health's budget proposal, this merge would cost over \$840,000 initially and continue to cost for 4-5 years to come.

As for improving services, you have all been sent statistics on Nevada's Early Intervention programs.

From these statistics alone, you can see that First Step & HAPPY (Home Activities Program for Parents and Youngsters) already do a far better job than Special Children's Clinic does in achieving positive outcomes for Nevada's children with disabilities.

Couple this with the personal stories I've heard from families who have had experiences with both programs and there just isn't any doubt that First Step & HAPPY's service delivery models should prevail.

As well, they mirror service delivery models in other states that have been proven to have the most successful outcomes.

Nevada ranks second to last in number of children served.

We are serving less than half of the children we should be.

Special Children's Clinic has a drop out rate of more than 62%, when 20% is statistically high.

First Step's drop out rate is below 20%.

HAPPY's rate is just above 20%

Special Children's clinic spends \$684 of taxpayers' money per child for dianostics and 2/3 of those children NEVER RECEIVE ANY SERVICES.

By law, children shouldn't wait more than 45 days from referral to a program to receiving services.

Special Children's Clinic's wait lists have gone UP from 152.8 days in 2001 to 217.4 days in the 3rd quarter of 2003.

First Steps' wait time has gone DOWN from 70.8 to 67.6 days during the same time period.

First Step has done this with frozen positions.

HAPPY has gone from 69 to 56.4 days.

Families have been told over and over that this would be a "seamless" merge based on "best practice".

At the last ICC meeting, Alex Haartz finally admitted that there is no "plan" for building a NEW Early Intervention program and there is no staff training going on.

Parents who gave their precious time to be part of the reorganization meetings wonder why they were ended abruptly and no "plan" for a "NEW" program emerged.

How "seamless" is that?

After the ICC meeting, less than three months before this merge was to take place, the Department of Health finally agreed to meet with families and staff from First Step and Special Children's Clinic.

What was their plan for what would happen as of July 1, 2003 before that?

"Business as usual", Special Children's Clinic style?

Why not when they have not changed their service delivery model to come into compliance in 20+ years and they've stated over and over that they WON'T give up the medical delivery model.

30 families as well as a large number of therapists & providers showed up at the First Step family meeting with Department of Health.

The stories told time and again stated the wonderful experiences with First Step and the let downs from Special Children's Clinic.

Mike Wilden stated to families that the Federal Part C funding is ONLY \$3 million and maybe it should be sent back so as not to have the headache of being in compliance with IDEA.

Alex Haartz stated that he's "not a fan" of natural environments.

As for moving Part C along with all the programs under the Department of Health, there are many concerns as this seems to be a conflict of interest. Parents were at a meeting with Alex Haartz where he stated that following Part C law is not a top priority of the Department of Health. If this is the Department of Health's view point, how can Part C effectively monitor programs when no longer administratively independent?

When OSEP responded to Nevada's Self-Improvement Plan, they expressed their concerns for lack of any consequences if programs remain out of compliance. If they're concerned, shouldn't you be, too?

Birth to age three is so important for ANY child. For a child with a disability, proper Early Intervention can change lives. What's going to happen to our already stressed school system when it's flooded with a bunch of children with disabilities that never received proper Early Intervention?

Judge Tony Abbatangelo, Assemblyman Rod Sherer and Nye county board of commissioners have all written letters to Mike Wilden in support of my efforts to involve parents in the process of building a new Early Intervention program for Nevada. ???As well, Mike Wilden signed agreeing to bring in an independent consultant to help put together a NEW Early Intervention program.???

Petition signed by concerned taxpayers.

Families are looking into their recourse through a class action law suit if Nevada's Early Intervention programs aren't improved.

We hope you will make the decision that's actually in the best interest of those that need these programs, not those that run them. If you vote to approve this budget transfer, we would hope there would be some sort of stipulation that if the programs are not in compliance with IDEA within two years, there would be some sort of accountability.

04/07/2003 14:19 FAX 702 455 4223

JC 3

001

APR 8 2003

JUDGE TONY ABBATANGELO



Justice Court, Las Vegas Township

CLARK COUNTY COURTHOUSE
200 S THIRD ST 2ND FL
PO BOX 582511
LAS VEGAS NV 89155-2511
(702) 455-4124 -- OFFICE
(702) 455-4223 -- FAX

April 2, 2003

Nevada Legislature
401 S. Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701

I am writing this letter on behalf of my friends, Dan and Jessie Evans. My wife and I have a daughter who plays with their daughter Sydney. We have become good friends over the years.

Dan and Jessie have a son, Clint, who has Downs Syndrome. A healthy positive environment is mandatory for the development of any child. This is even more true for a child with Downs Syndrome.

Dan and Jessie have given Clint all the love and support any child needs. They have handled a difficult situation admirably. Essentially, they have done the right thing. Clint was put into therapy as a baby. Dan and Jessie have worked with their son to develop Clint into a healthy, happy, and loving child. The Evans' attribute much of Clint's progress to the people at First Step.

Dan and Jessie have been extremely happy with the First Step Program. The First

04/07/2003 14:20 FAX 702 455 4223

JC 3

002

I, as well as the Evans', understand the budget concerns facing the Legislature. Yet if these programs are to be consolidated for practical and financial reasons then the better program should prevail. I highly recommend the committee hear testimony from actual participants in both programs, as well as the administrators and staff from the respective program.

Thank you for your time in this matter. If you have any questions, please call me at the above number.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Abbatangelo", written in a cursive style.

Tony Abbatangelo

TA:ah

04/24/2003 13:10 FAX 775 684 8888

NEVADA STATE ASSEMBLY

001/001

ROD SHERER
ASSEMBLYMAN
District No. 36



COMMITTEES:
Member
Constitutional Amendments
Judiciary
Transportation

DISTRICT OFFICE:
2081 Zuni Avenue
Pahrump, Nevada 89048-4811
Office/Fax: (775) 751-5712

LEGISLATIVE BUILDING:
401 S. Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701-4747
Office: (775) 684-8805
Fax No.: (775) 684-1360

State of Nevada Assembly

Seventy-Second Session

April 24, 2003

Nevada State Department of Health and Human Services
Attn: Michael J. Willden, Director
505 East King Street
Room 600
Carson City, Nevada 89701-3708

Dear Michael,

I am writing you a letter of support for Jessi Evans the representative for ICC Board for First Step.

I will support Jessi, in her working with Family Participation in developing a new early intervention program for Nevada. I have known Jessi for a short time but I am very impressed with her many abilities to get the job done. She is what I consider to be a fireball. By letting Jessi get started on this issue she will help fix it for us.

I would appreciate your consideration for Jessi to start the process. If there are any questions or I call help do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rod Sherer", written over a light-colored background.



April 25, 2003

Nevada State Department of Health and Human Services
Attn: Michael J. Willden, Director
505 East King Street
Room 600
Carson City, Nevada 89701-3708

Dear Mr. Willden:

Two of our County Commissioners recently had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Jessi Evans, the representative for the ICC Board for First Step. They were both very impressed with her knowledge of the issues for which she is an advocate and her passion for the children and families of the entire State of Nevada.

Nye County supports Ms. Evans in her endeavors with the ICC Board and in her efforts to inform the State Legislature of the best course of action for the families of this State. She is keenly aware of the needs of these families both in the metropolitan and in the rural areas of the State.

As a Commissioner for a rural county, I am very concerned how the proposed merger of the First Step program will impact our citizens in Nye County. The First Step program has an excellent track record of providing the much needed services to our families.

Nye County would appreciate your consideration of the families in rural Nevada by allowing Jessi Evans to help resolve the issues that are facing us and continuing the First Step program.

Sincerely,

Henry Neth
Nye County Board of Commissioners
Chairman