

## **Frequently Asked Questions About EOHHS**

### **1. What is the primary goal for creating the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) by statute?**

The EOHHS was created to facilitate collaboration between the state's health and human service departments. Streamlining certain administrative functions and the identifying inefficiencies and duplication will maximize financial resources and lead to the development of more cohesive health and human services policy.

### **2. What are some of the more specific goals of the EOHHS?**

- Improving access to high quality services
- Creating a more flexible and responsive system of care
- Promoting innovation and excellence
- Assuring system-wide accountability
- Providing financial stewardship

The EOHHS is currently working on a number of projects geared toward achieving these goals. Among those projects is one aimed at developing a more efficient approach for providing staff education and development that offers additional opportunities for cross training staff while, at the same time, enhancing each agency's capacity to build a workforce with the specialized skills and expertise required to carry out its core mission.

The EOHHS will resolve administrative, jurisdictional, operational, program or policy conflicts between departments; direct the development of goals, objectives and plans necessary for the effective operation of the state's health and human service system; and, coordinate and/or consolidate core administrative functions in order to maximize resources.

### **3. Will the establishment of the EOHHS diminish the missions and identities of the individual departments?**

No. The statutory mandates of the departments and their unique program identities will not change. By facilitating interagency cooperation, the EOHHS will provide the departments with a greater opportunity to focus on providing and improving direct services to assist their unique populations.

### **4. Will any of the five departments be abolished as a result of the statutory establishment of the EOHHS?**

No. The Executive Order that created the EOHHS does not in any way alter the structure, statutory functions or legal status of the departments. What it does, instead, is identify a set of specific areas where the EOHHS will play a role in supporting the work of the departments.

### **5. Will the department directors be appointed by the Secretary or by the Governor? How will that process work under the EOHHS?**

The appointment of directors is now and will remain a responsibility of the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. The manner in which directors are appointed, their role in state government and their statutory authority and obligations will not be altered. Though not the appointing authority, the managing director of the EOHHS has acted as the governor's liaison to the department directors and has advised the governor on a cross-section of issues affecting all five departments. At the same time the managing director has facilitated communications between the departments and provided direction and guidance on important strategic policies.

#### **6. Who will appoint the Secretary of the EOHHS?**

The Secretary will be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

#### **7. How is the legal role of the department director impacted by the statutorily based creation of the EOHHS?**

The statutory duties and powers of department directors will not be diminished. Their responsibilities to administer programs in accordance with the Governor's priorities will remain the same.

#### **8. What are the advantages of the EOHHS from a department director perspective?**

The department directors will benefit from operating within the framework of a more coordinated, cohesive health and human service system. Operating under a clear policy agenda and using a coordinated budget will eliminate guesswork on the part of the directors, as well as the potential for conflicts and contradictions in areas where their duties or programs intersect. The directors will also, based on improved administrative efficiencies, be in a position to devote more of their time and energy toward fulfilling their specific agency missions and prioritizing agency objectives. Working closely together under the auspices of the EOHHS, the directors will also benefit from the sharing of resources and information, including "best practices."

#### **9. Will the EOHHS be involved with the day-to-day operations of the individual departments?**

Day-to-day management of the departments will remain a function of the individual directors. The role of the EOHHS is to foster and enhance opportunities for collaboration and cooperation and to provide strategic leadership and oversight in key areas.

#### **10. Will the department directors continue to have direct access to the Governor and his Executive staff?**

Yes. The directors will continue to be critical members of the Governor's leadership team.

#### **11. Will the statutory creation of the EOHHS result in layoffs for state employees?**

It is not the intent to eliminate any positions other than those that may be lost over time due to attrition (retirement, etc.).

**12. Will the statutory creation of the EOHHS result in cost savings to the state?**

The EOHHS has and will continue to work with the departments to increase coordination and eliminate waste and address overlapping services. Through these efforts, program quality, efficiency and effectiveness should result. Some of these efforts may generate cost savings.

**13. Will the departments continue to develop their individual agency budgets?**

Yes. The EOHHS will provide oversight of budgetary priorities from a broader administrative perspective. Understanding all of the budgets and how they affect and/or relate to one another will be a critical function of the EOHHS, as will communicating that perspective to all of the departments. This process will allow the EOHHS to look beyond specific funding streams with a view toward the broader policy picture and the integration and improvement of services. The goal here is to remove “silos” and meet the individual needs of children, elders, adults, and adults with disabilities, veterans and other special population, many of whom receive related services from more than one department. Shaping budgetary priorities and providing this broader perspective will help eliminate competition for finite resources and enhance cooperation.

**14. How will the EOHHS be staffed?**

The EOHHS’s staff is made up of a small team of highly skilled and experienced employees that were loaned from the departments when the EOHHS was created in 2004. Some of the staff loaned from the departments were part of the original Fiscal Fitness team, while others were DHS employees or are funded under a new federal grant initiative. Functions of the EOHHS will be carried out by this core group of professionals who will utilize, as they do now, workgroups composed of specialists and experts drawn from particular areas within each of the departments. The EOHHS’s core staff will also be responsible for coordinating and providing support to the workgroups and facilitating cooperation between the participants and the departments they represent.

**15. Will the state end up spending more money to hire additional employees and set up this new office?**

The Office is financed through existing state resources and outside funds from grants. Also, savings generated through cost saving initiatives should continue to cover the cost of the office’s operation. No additional FTE’s are expected to be added to staff the Office. Staffing will be accomplished within the existing FTE caps of the member departments. The office is funded through a reallocation of existing state resources; no new state funds are being expended to fund the EOHHS.

**16. How will the EOHHS relate to advisory groups, committees and commissions?**

The roles of the advisory groups, committees and commissions will remain relatively unaffected by the EOHHS. Most of these groups focus on specific populations and issues; whereas, the EOHHS is focusing on the coordination and utilization of resources across the departments.