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Agency of Human Services

MEMORANDUM

To: Representative Toll, Chair, House Appropriations Committee

From: Ken Schatz, Commissioner

Subject: Follow-up to questions from AHS SFY 20 budget testimony

Date: February 1, 2019

Several questions regarding the DCF budget came up during the AHS SFY 2020 budget presentation. We plan to address these questions in our budget presentation on Monday, 2/4/19, but wanted to give you some information in advance.

How many homes impacted by crisis fuel benefit change?

This change does not impact the number of crisis households served or the amount of crisis benefit received. This change will allow us to use federal dollars to serve approximately 456 households between 150% - 185% of the FPL instead of state funds by using SMI instead of FPL. In Vermont, 60% SMI equals 185% FPL.

Can you explain why Reach Up is so low compared to others?

ESD continues to experience declines across its programs except for emergency housing. We believe Reach Up has declined more given the very low eligibility threshold, to qualify families are usually below 80% of the FPL. A family working 30 hours a week at the current minimum wage would not generally qualify for Reach Up and would transition off the program to Reach Ahead due to their earned income.

Comparison of Caseload between PCCs and DCF employees

The PCCs historically served younger Reach Up parents whose needs revolved around education. ESD case managers generally serve older parents with significantly more barriers, with a focus on eliminating those barriers to move toward employment. Given this factor, we do not compare the work placement rate between the two caseloads. As the caseload has declined the number of younger parents has



experienced a larger decline, from 1320 to 522, a 61% decline.

What is the projected Case Manager to RU Participant ration under the proposal?

Currently, the average active case management caseload for ESD and PCC contracted case managers is approximately 24.5 cases per case manager.

No longer using PCC contracted case managers will increase the average ESD case manager to 34 cases per case manager. This is still well below the average number of active case management cases per ESD case manager at the peak of the caseload in SFY13.

We look forward to discussing these issues and providing answers to the other questions raised regarding Family Services and Child Development when we meet on Monday.