



**Ninety-Seventh Legislature - First Session - 2001**  
**Committee Statement**  
**LB 623**

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**Hearing Date:** February 14, 2001

**Committees On:** Appropriations and Health and Human Services

**Introducers:** (Thompson)

**Title:** Change public health service, mental health service, and respite service provisions and create a research center at the Univ. of Nebr. Medical Center

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**Roll Call Vote – Final Committee Action:**

Advanced to General File

Advanced to General File with Amendments

X Indefinitely Postponed

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**Vote Results:**

<p>16 Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Present, not voting</p> <p>Absent</p>	<p>Senator Jensen, Wehrbein, Byars, Pederson, Beutler, Cudaback, Engel, Hilgert, Suttle, Thompson, Price, Kruse, Foley, Cunningham, Maxwell and Erdman</p>
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**Proponents:**

Senator Nancy Thompson  
 Dr. Ted DeLaet  
 Jill Rubottom  
 Susan Boust  
 Krynn Buckley  
 Kathy Moore  
 Aleisa McKinclay  
 Roger Keetle  
 Doris Lassiter  
 Elaine Menzel  
 David Holmquist

**Representing:**

Introducer  
 Nebraska Psychological Association  
 Region V  
 Self  
 Nebraska Medical Association  
 Voices for Children of Nebraska  
 NE Advocacy Services  
 NE Association of Hospitals and Health Systems  
 Nebraska Minority Public Health Association  
 Nebraska Association of County Officials  
 Citizens for Health NE & American Cancer Society

**Opponents:**

Denis McCarville  
 Mark Welsch

**Representing:**

Children and Family Coalition of Nebraska  
 G.A.S.P.

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**Neutral:**

Rex Holsapple  
Sheryl Scherepf  
Topher Hanson

Terry Workman  
Carol Boye  
Pat Lopez  
Sheila Bjerrum  
Chuck Stepaneck

**Representing:**

State Investment Officer  
Nebraska Behavioral Health Coalition  
Nebraska Association of Behavioral Health  
Organizations  
AARP  
Community Alliance  
Nebraskans for Public Health  
Nebraskans for Public Health  
Nebraska Nurses Association

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**Summary of purpose and/or changes:** The bill relates to the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act (sections 71-7605 to 71-7614). Sections 1 through 3 of the bill relate to the use of funds from the act for public health services. The bill requires that funds allocated to county, district, or city-county health departments from the Nebraska Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund under section 71-7608 be disbursed to counties based on population. Each county board must appropriate such funds to the county, district, or city-county health department serving such county. Funding must be used by such department to support public health services designed to protect and improve the health of Nebraskans by (a) emphasizing services to promote health and prevent illness, disease and disability, (b) providing effective coordination and use of community resources, and (c) extending health services into the community.

Section 4 relates to the use of funding under the act for mental health services under the Nebraska Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services Act. Regional governing boards under section 71-5009 are required to use funds from the Nebraska Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund for community-based services for the mentally ill. Funds must be distributed to the six regional governing boards based on the population of such regions and such funds may not be mingled with General Funds received or disbursed by such regions and may not be used to meet the county match requirement provided under section 71-5009. At least twenty-five percent of the funds distributed under this section must be used for mental health services for adult and juvenile offenders.

Section 5 amends section 71-7608, to require the annual transfer of investment income from the Nebraska Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund as follows: (a) \$12 million to the six regional governing boards for community-based services for the mentally ill as provided in section 71-5009; (b) \$2 million to the Department of Correctional Services for mental health treatment services for offenders; (c) \$1 million to the Office of Juvenile Services for mental health treatment services for juvenile offenders under section 43-407; (d) \$11 million for public health initiatives as follows: (i) \$550,000 to the Nebraska Center for Education and Applied Research in Public Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), (ii) \$200,000 to the Masters in Public Health Program at University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO)/UNMC, (iii) \$1 million for the Lifespan Respite Services Program of the Department of Health and Human Services, and (iv) \$9,250,000 for county, district. Or city-county health departments; (e) \$1 million to the Office of Minority Health for special initiatives to eliminate racial disparities in health outcomes, and (f) the remainder to the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund.

Section 6 requires UNO and UNMC to jointly offer a masters degree program in public health, funded with revenue from the Nebraska Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund.

Section 7 of the bill establishes the Nebraska Center for Education and Applied Research in Public Health at UNMC, to be funded with revenue from the Nebraska Tobacco Settlement

Trust Fund. The director of the center must be appointed by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska and serves as the chief executive officer and scientific director of the institute. The purpose and function of the center is to "ensure excellence in public health prevention practices through research-based activities that are measured, evaluated, and accountable." The center must provide assistance and training to communities and facilitate information exchanges between local health departments. The center is also required to provide research "relating to health services, evaluation, epidemiologic and policy to demonstrate and disseminate evidence-based public health actions." The center is permitted to receive and accept grants, gifts or other contributions from any governmental or private agency or from person, firms or corporations.

The bill outright repeals section 71-1628.01.

**Explanation of amendments, if any:**

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**Senator Roger R. Wehrbein, Chairperson**

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**Senator Jim Jensen, Chairperson**