

FISCAL NOTE
LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ANALYST ESTIMATE

ESTIMATE OF FISCAL IMPACT – STATE AGENCIES *				
	FY 2009-10		FY 2010-11	
	EXPENDITURES	REVENUE	EXPENDITURES	REVENUE
GENERAL FUNDS	\$626,650 - \$1,552,350		\$619,910 - \$1,545,610	
CASH FUNDS				
FEDERAL FUNDS				
OTHER FUNDS				
TOTAL FUNDS	\$626,650 - \$1,552,350		\$619,910 - \$1,545,610	

*Does not include any impact on political subdivisions. See narrative for political subdivision estimates.

LB 275 requires regional behavioral health authorities to operate a crisis, information and referral service, staffed 24-hours per day by trained behavioral health personnel. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is to provide the requirements for such crisis service. A data and information system is to be maintained to provide the number of persons using the crisis services in each behavioral health region and the type and efficacy of such services.

State Administration: HHS estimates the need for 2.25 FTE for administrative purposes. The department projects the need for a Trainer to assist behavioral health regions with training needs for staff. HHS also indicates a Statistical Analyst III will be needed to maintain and analyze the data required to be collected. The need for a .25 Program Specialist is also projected to help administer the provisions of the bill. This fiscal note assumes behavioral health regions or a contracted provider will be responsible for hiring and training staff for the crisis service, so no additional trainer will be needed at the state level. It is assumed HHS will need one new position to administer and coordinate the provisions of the bill and collect and analyze data. The estimated general fund cost for one additional employee and operating costs is \$72,350 in 2009-10 and \$65,610 in 2010-11.

Crisis Line Operations: It is unknown whether the six regional behavioral health providers will contract for the provision of the crisis, information and referral service or directly provide the service. It is possible that regions may differ in the how the service is provided. HHS indicates that the department currently provides aid funds to each of the six regions for a 24/7 crisis phone service. Regions differ on whether the target population for current crisis services includes children as well as adults. The qualifications of staff may also vary. The bill requires trained behavioral health personnel.

The fiscal impact is dependent upon the quantity and type of staff hired, start-up and on-going operating expenses, and the volume of calls received. Start-up costs could include additional office space, training, equipment and computer needs.

HHS estimates an annual cost of \$1,850,000 for the operation and staffing of the 24/7 crisis service. The department projects that aid funding currently provided to the regions for crisis lines amounts to about 20% of the estimated cost, or \$370,000. So, HHS estimates the net estimated general fund fiscal impact for the crisis service is \$1,480,000.

Boys Town operates a National Hotline which uses a team of counselors to link callers to help in their community. Information received from Boys Town regarding estimates of the costs for a call center that would be operated in each region showed estimated staff expenses of about \$1,848,600. The estimates did not include start-up, training, hiring, equipment, space or data management expenses. The staffing level for each center was assumed to be six FTE. This fiscal note assumes one FTE could be reduced from the estimate and the savings in staff expenses could be used for the other costs not enumerated in the Boys Town estimate.

Boys Town also provided an estimate of potential costs if a region opted to contract from Boys Town for such a service. If an existing service provider is used, it may be possible to reduce estimated expenditures for the crisis service by up to 50% since charges would be assessed based upon a higher volume of calls paid for by more contributors to the cost of the crisis service. The actual cost of service will depend upon requirements set for the crisis line, such as whether calls have to be answered within a certain time period, etc.

Based upon the two information sources, it is assumed the net annual increased fiscal impact of the crisis service will range from \$554,300 to \$1,480,000 of general funds, depending upon how the crisis service is provided.