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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Legislative Council Special Committee on  
Public Assistance Program Integrity

FROM: Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf, Senior Legislative Associate 

DATE: September 8, 2010

SUBJECT: County Panel - Opening Comments

Thank you so much for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss public assistance program integrity from the county perspective.

As you know, counties play an important role in the administration of public assistance programs. County governments are responsible for providing the most basic services to Wisconsin residents in need – food, housing, medical care. The state requires counties to perform initial eligibility determinations for the FoodShare, Medical Assistance, BadgerCare, Emergency Assistance and Child Care programs and to ensure individuals continue to meet eligibility requirements at specified intervals.

With the national and state economies recovering from a downward spiral, more and more families are in need of safety net services. Counties have reported dramatic increases in FoodShare and Medical Assistance applications. In tough economic times, business at county human services departments increases.

There is also a change in the type of client seeking safety net services from counties. A large share of the increased caseload is first-time applicants – our friends and neighbors who have recently lost their jobs due to changing economic conditions. Their expectations are different as well – they expect service and expect that service quickly. The state does not provide sufficient funding to counties to provide safety net services in a timely and efficient manner. Unfortunately, the income maintenance administration allocation, funding provided to counties to perform eligibility determinations and other economic support functions, has decreased over the years. ARRA funds allocated to counties in this current budget cycle, approximately \$4.2

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million, are no longer available, leaving a large funding gap. Funding for fraud prevention and detection has virtually been eliminated.

As my role today is to serve as moderator for our panel of county experts in this area, I am going to turn it over at this time to John Rathman, Deputy Director of the Outagamie County Department of Health and Human Services, to discuss income maintenance and program integrity funding trends. I should mention that Mr. Rathman also serves as co-chair of the Wisconsin County Human Services Association's Economic Support Policy Advisory Committee.

Our next two speakers are also experts in the field.

Next we will hear from Marcia MacKenzie, Dane County Corporation Counsel.

Our final speaker before we open it up for questions is Sue Rhode, Fraud Investigator with the Waukesha Department of Health and Human Services. Ms. Rhode is also a member of the Wisconsin Association on Public Assistance Fraud.

Thank you so much for your time today. We are happy to answer any questions committee members may have.