

# HUMAN SERVICES MODEL FEASIBILITY STUDY TASK FORCE

## FOCUS GROUP PACKET

Thank you for participating in a focus group on potential models human services collaboration in Langlade, Lincoln and Marathon counties. This packet provides information that will be discussed during the focus group sessions.

The packet contains the following information:

1. Membership and charge of the Human Services Model Feasibility Study Task Force.
2. How human services are currently provided in Langlade, Lincoln and Marathon Counties.
3. Reasons for pursuing increased human services collaboration.
4. Alternative approaches under consideration by the Task Force:
  - a. Option 1: Status quo with increased collaboration
  - b. Option 2: Collaboration Advisory Committee
  - c. Option 3: Multi-County Human Service Department through North Central Health Care (NCHC)

For each option, the packet includes questions for focus group participants.

5. "Comment Pages" for writing your comments during the focus group sessions. We request that you give these sheets to the facilitator at the end of the focus group session, to make sure that we capture all your thoughts and suggestions.

## Membership and Charge of the Human Services Model Feasibility Study Task Force

The Human Services Model Feasibility Study Task Force is responsible for the following:

- Conduct a feasibility study to determine the feasibility of providing child welfare services on a multi-county basis.
- Identify methods to more effectively or efficiently deliver child welfare services by means of intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration, such that children and families are served better.
- Identify the impacts to the organizational structure of other social service programs in the event the method of delivering child welfare services is changed.

The Task Force will develop a feasibility study and make recommendations to the Langlade, Lincoln and Marathon County Boards and the North Central Health Care (NCHC) Board. The Task Force does not have the authority to approve or implement changes to the current organizational structure.

Task Force Members include:

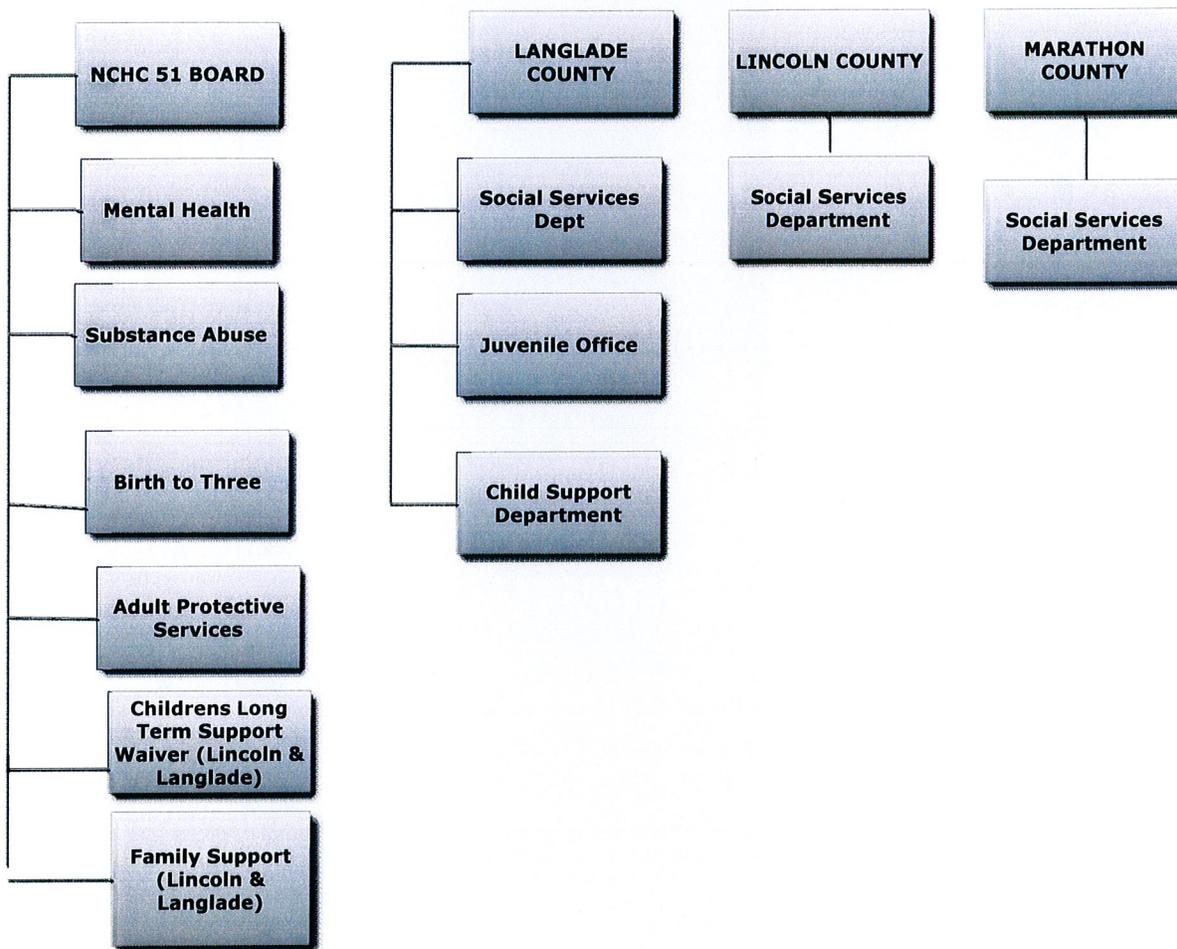
Nancy Bergstrom	Lincoln County Corporation Counsel
Gary Bezucha	NCHC Chief Executive Officer
Gail Chapman	WI Department of Health Services Area Administration
Ken Day	Marathon County Board
Bruce Giese	Lincoln County Board
Gary Gisselman	Marathon County Board (also on NCHC Board)
Dick Hurlbert	Langlade County Board Chair
Brad Karger	Marathon County Administrator
Joanne Leonard	Marathon County Board
Bob Lussow	Lincoln County Board Chair
Mike Nelson	Lincoln County Social Services Director

Ron Nye	Langlade County Board (also on NCHC Board)
John Robinson	Marathon County Board (also on NCHC Board)
Randy Scholz	Lincoln County Administrative Coordinator
Toni Simonson	NCHC Senior Executive—Outpatient Services
Teresa Steinmetz	WI Department of Children and Families
Robin Stowe	Langlade County Corporation Counsel
Vicki Tylka	Marathon County Social Services Director
Kim Van Hoof	Langlade County Social Services Director
Bob Weaver	Lincoln County Board (also on NCHC Board)

The Task Force is facilitated by Gail Nordheim (Gail Nordheim Consulting LLC) and Gerry Born (Knapp's Development Incorporated). The facilitators will be leading the focus group sessions.

## How Human Services are Currently Provided in Langlade, Lincoln and Marathon Counties

### CURRENT SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL



Currently, some human services in the three-county area are provided by NCHC, while other services are provided directly by the counties:

- Since 1983, the three counties collaborated in the provision of mental health, substance abuse and disability services authorized under Chapter 51, Wisconsin Statutes. The three

counties have participated in a “Joint County Contract” establishing North Central Health Care as a “51 Board” for the three county area. The NCHC 51Board includes representatives from all three counties.

NCHC provides mental health, substance abuse and developmental disability services for the three counties. More recently, it has also assumed responsibility for providing Adult Protective Services for all three counties, Children’s Long Term Support Waiver services in Lincoln and Langlade Counties, and Family Support services in Lincoln and Langlade Counties.

- Each county directly administers social services programs authorized under Chapter 46, Wisconsin Statutes. These programs include:
  - Child Welfare
  - Juvenile Justice
  - Child Care
  - Child Support
  - Income Maintenance

In Marathon and Lincoln Counties, all three of these programs are administered by the Social Services Department. In Langlade, Child Welfare and Child Care are administered by the Social Services Department, while Juvenile Justice is administered through the Juvenile Justice Office, which is part of the Juvenile Court.

County Social Services Departments also administer the WHEAP Energy Assistance Program.

In addition, the Marathon County Social Services Department administers the Children’s Long-Term Support Waiver. This program is administered by NCHC in Lincoln and Langlade Counties.

- All three county social services departments administer the Income Maintenance program as part of regional Income Maintenance Consortia. Langlade and Marathon Counties belong to the Central Income Maintenance Consortium, while Lincoln County belongs to the Northern Income Maintenance Consortium.

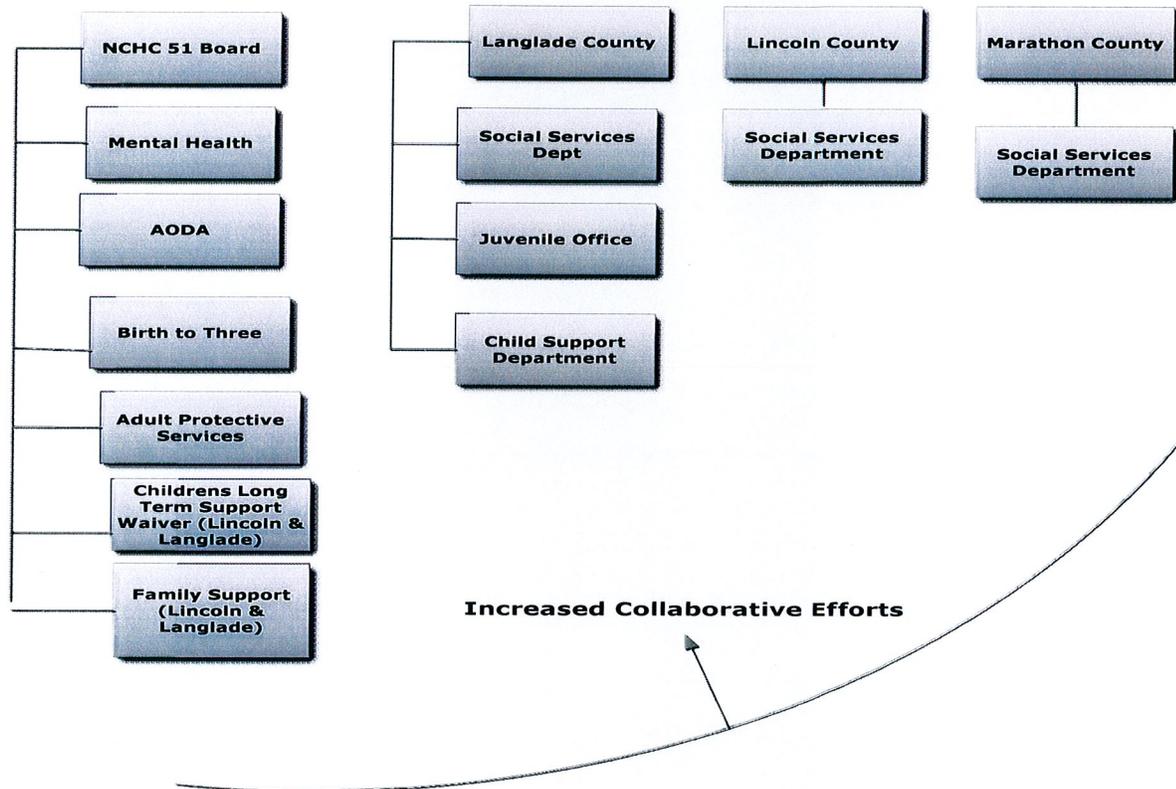
## Reasons for Pursuing Increased Human Services Collaboration

The Human Services Collaboration Task Force has identified the following reasons for considering increased human services collaboration in the three-county area:

1. Human Services collaboration provides the opportunity for continued excellence in customer service, despite increasing financial pressures. It helps assure that a consistent level of services is available to residents in the three-county area.
2. Human Services collaboration has the potential to improve the quality of human services delivery. For example, increased collaboration may make it possible to:
  - Improve coordination of child welfare and juvenile justice programs with mental health and AODA services, resulting in more comprehensive services to address the needs of children and families.
  - Provide access to specialized services that currently are not affordable to individual counties, but which could be afforded if resources were pooled through collaboration.
  - Provide opportunities for specialization that would not be possible for individual counties.
3. Human Services collaboration has the potential to improve the efficiency of human services delivery. For example, it may be possible to:
  - Streamline program management by reducing the number of supervisory positions needed.
  - Achieve savings through bulk purchasing.
  - Streamline program management by consolidating administrative functions such as human resources and financial services.
4. Laclede, Lincoln, and Marathon counties have already successfully collaborated by consolidating their mental health, AODA and developmental disabilities programs under North Central Health Care. This collaboration has resulted in positive fiscal and programmatic results. Given this success, it makes sense to consider expanding collaboration to human services programs as well.
5. It is important for counties to take initiative at the local level, rather than waiting for the state to tell them what to do. By pursuing human services collaboration, the three counties can develop and implement an approach that corresponds to local needs.

## OPTION 1—STATUS QUO WITH INCREASED COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

### OPTION 1--STATUS QUO WITH INCREASED COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS



#### Description of this option:

- No change would be made in the current human services delivery model. However, increased efforts could be made by the counties and NCHC to promote collaboration. Under current law, collaboration could take place under the following statutory authority:
  - Joint powers agreement [s.66.0301, Stats].
  - Purchasing or selling services to/from other county social services departments or NCHC [s.46.22(1)(e), Stats].

In addition, “umbrella legislation” being proposed by the Wisconsin Counties Association and the Wisconsin County Human Services Association would potentially increase the scope of human services collaboration that counties could pursue. This proposed legislation is currently

at early stages of development, though the associations expect that it will be considered by the legislature during a forthcoming legislative session.

Impact of this option:

- Legal. Maintaining the status quo would not require any legal action. (If collaboration were to take place under the provisions of current law, legal action might be required. However, the impact is unknown until and unless collaboration takes place.)
- Human Resources. Maintaining the status quo would have no impact on human resource needs. (Again, a potential collaboration could affect human resources, but that cannot be known at this time.)
- Local control. Maintaining the status quo would not have any impact on local control.
- Potential for collaboration. This option would not significantly increase the potential for collaboration.

Advantages and disadvantages of this option

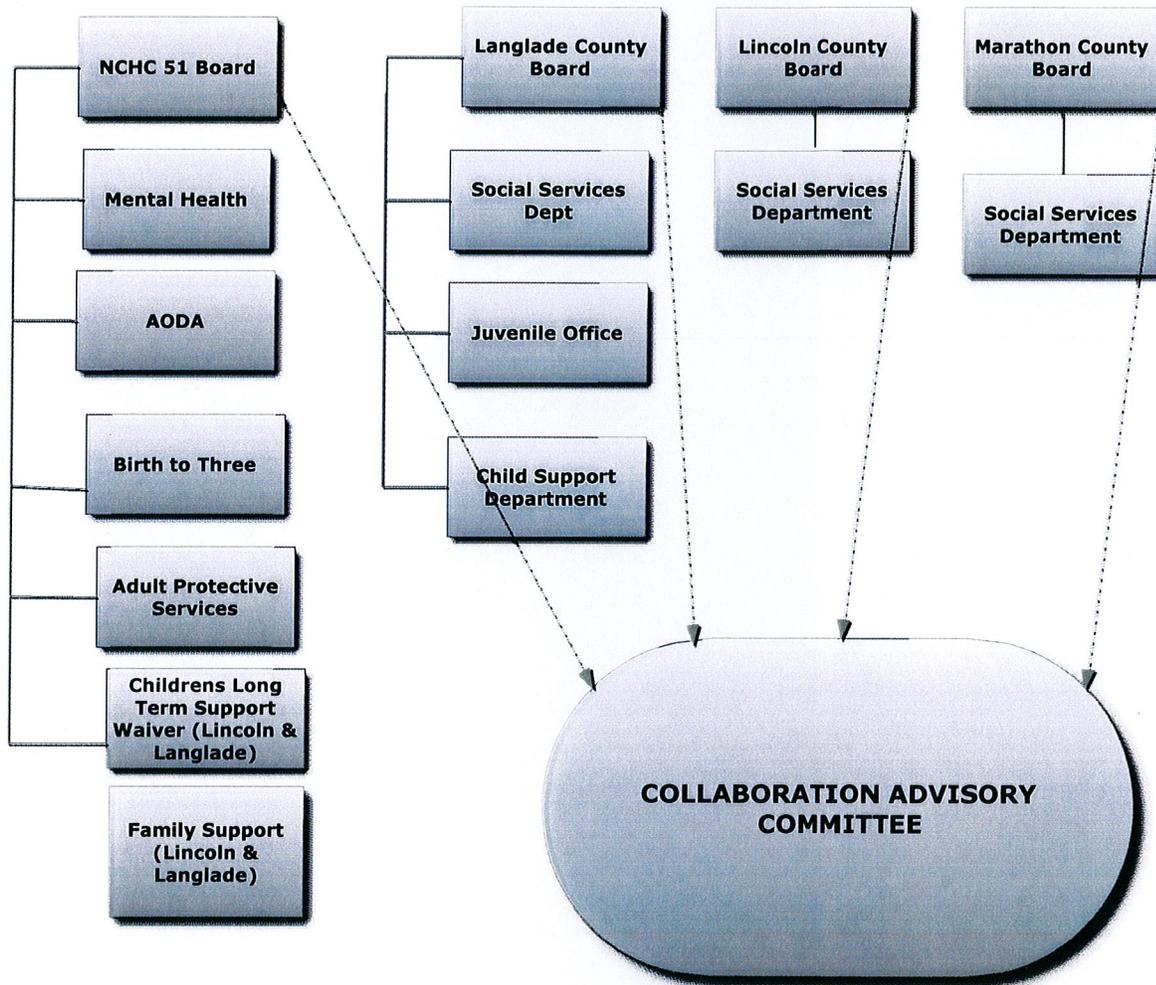
- In its discussions to date, the Task Force has identified the following potential advantages of maintaining the status quo:
  - Change is hard. This option would not require change but change would be possible.
  - Maintaining the status quo avoids political complications.
  - It is still possible to collaborate under current structure.
  - No state approval or legal action would be required unless particular collaborations are undertaken.
  - Each county maintains its own autonomy.
  - Eventual passage of umbrella legislation would increase options for collaboration.
- The Task force has identified the following potential disadvantages of maintaining the status quo:
  - Since little or no collaboration has taken place in the past, no significant change should be expected.
  - There is no imperative or incentive for change.

Questions for focus group participants on Option 1—Status Quo

- What do you see as the most important advantages of the way that human services are currently delivered in the 3 county area?
- What do you see as the most important disadvantages of the way that human services are currently delivered in the 3 county area?
- Please discuss how you interact with the current system. In your daily interactions with the system, what works well and what does not work well?

## OPTION 2: COUNTY/NCHC COLLABORATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### OPTION 2--COUNTY/NCHC COLLABORATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE



#### Description of this option:

- The three counties and NCHC would establish an advisory committee to promote human services collaboration. The advisory committee would:
  - Identify opportunities for collaboration.
  - Oversee collaborative efforts.
  - Evaluate collaborative efforts.

- Committee members represent county and NCHC boards. Elected officials would co-chair the committee.
- The Committee could potentially hire staff to help carry out its work.
- The committee would identify collaboration opportunities that are available under current law. In addition, if the “Umbrella Legislation” described under Option 1 were to pass, the scope of collaboration opportunities would increase.

Impact of this option:

The Collaboration Advisory Committee would have the following potential impacts:

- Legal. The legal impact of this option would depend on how the Committee was established:
  - The Committee could be informally established, with no legal action required.
  - It could be formally established under a joint powers agreement, pursuant to s.66.0301 WI Statutes.
  - Each county board (and the NCHC Board) could pass resolutions establishing the committee.
- Local control. There would be an expectation that the counties and NCHC would comply with board recommendations, however this would not be required.
- Human resources. The impact of this option on human resources needs depends on specific collaborations recommended by committee (and whether these collaborations are ultimately carried out). It also depends on whether the committee hires staff.
- Potential for collaboration. Having a dedicated committee focused on collaboration might increase the likelihood that collaboration would occur.

Advantages and disadvantages of this option

- In its discussions to date, the Task Force has identified the following potential advantages of a Collaboration Advisory Committee:
  - This option provides a structure for cooperation.
  - It promotes open discussion and transparency.
  - It can address a range of topics.
  - Eventual passage of umbrella legislation would increase collaborative options that the committee can consider.
  - Forming the committee would represent a proactive step towards promoting collaboration.
  - This option is non-threatening.

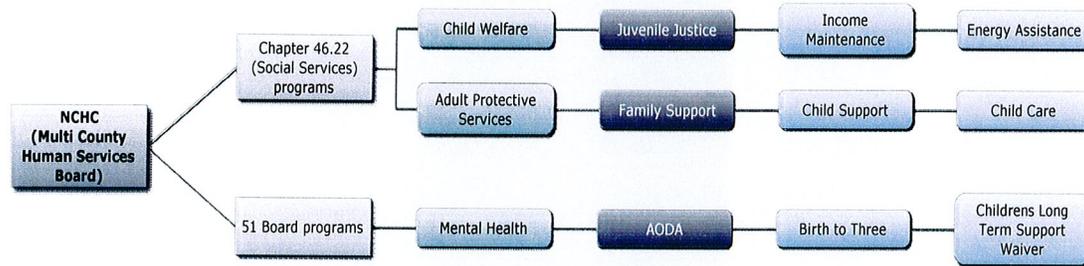
- The Task force has identified the following potential disadvantages of a Collaboration Advisory Committee:
  - The Committee would have no real power.
  - Implementation of Committee recommendations would still require approval from all three county boards or agencies and NCHC.
  - Implementation of Committee recommendations could be administratively complex.
  - Committees can be bogged down and non-productive.

Questions for focus group participants on Option 2—Advisory Committee

- What are the major opportunities associated with this option?
- What are potential barriers or challenges associated with this option?
- What are particularly important issues for the Task Force to keep in mind as it considers this option?

## OPTION 3: MULTI-COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT THROUGH NORTH CENTRAL HEALTH CARE (NCHC)

Option 3--Multi-County Department of Human Services through NCHC



### Description of this option:

- NCHC would become a multi-county Human Service Department serving the 3 county area
- Lincoln, Langlade, and Marathon Counties would no longer have social services departments. NCHC would no longer be just a “51 board” and agency.
- NCHC would administer all current social services programs along with current “51 Board” programs

### Impact of this option:

The multi-county Human Service Department would have the following potential impacts:

- Legal. The following legal action would be required to implement this option:
  - Approval by the Wisconsin Departments of Health Services, Children and Families, and Corrections.
  - The three counties vote to dissolve NCHC 51.42 Board.
  - Each county dissolves its social services department.
  - Each county approves participation in multi-county human services department through NCHC.
  - Each county appoints members to the new multi-county human services board.
  - The human services board adopts by-laws and hires a director.
  - The multi-county Human Service Department would need to join an Income Maintenance consortium.
- Local control. There would be indirect county oversight through county representatives on the human services board.

- Human resources. This option:
  - Reduces number of directors/CEOs from four to one.
    - Currently the NCHC CEO oversees 51 Board programs and the three county social services department directors oversee social services programs, for a total of four people.
    - Under this option, would have one NCHC CEO overseeing the multi-county Human Services Department.
  - Reduces the number of program managers. (For example, only one child welfare program manager, not three, would be needed.)
  - Additional impact on human resources needs to be determined. Staffing levels must support full service access throughout the three-county area.
  
- Potential for collaboration.
  - Social services programs would be fully integrated.
  - There would be potential for increased collaboration between social services programs and mental health, AODA and developmental disabilities programs, since all programs will be housed in a single agency.

#### Advantages and disadvantages of this option

- In its discussions to date, the Task Force has identified the following potential advantages of a multi-county human services department through NCHC:
  - There is already an established relationship between the three counties through operation of NCHC.
  - NCHC has an established structure on which the multi-county department of human services can be built (policies, procedures, business infrastructure).
  - This option provides for integration of social services with behavioral health services.
  - There is potential for administrative savings.
  - This option would provide a common level of service across all counties.
  - There is potential to build on current systems, reputation of NCHC, and client and county satisfaction.
  - Governance and funding models associated with the NCHC 51 Board are well accepted.
  - This option is proactive. Counties are taking initiative and not waiting for state-mandated changes.

- The Task force has identified the following potential disadvantages of multi-county human services department through NCHC:
  - Some may not want to expand the scope of NCHC services.
  - There may be perception of loss of local control.
  - Transitioning income maintenance services will require operating through a single income maintenance consortium.
  - Concern about current NCHC board structure.
  - Concern that NCHC does not have experience administering child welfare services or other social services programs.
  - Potential employee resistance.
  - Challenge of implementing major organizational change.
  - Transition issues for consumers.

Questions for focus group participants on Option 3: Multi-County Human Services Department through NCHC

- What are the major opportunities associated with this option? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are potential barriers or challenges associated with this option?
- What are particularly important issues for the Task Force to keep in mind as it considers this option?

## Focus Group Participant Comment Pages

Please write your comments on these pages and submit them to the Focus Group Facilitator at the end of the session.

If you are unable to attend a session but would like to comment, you can mail this page with your comments to:

Gail Nordheim Consulting LLC

5418 Old Middleton Rd. #103

Madison WI 53705

FAX: 608/442-6914

Or comments can be emailed to [Gail@gnconsulting.info](mailto:Gail@gnconsulting.info)

**Name of person submitting comments (optional):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Relationship to human/social services in the three county area (check as many as apply):**

I am a participant (or a family member/guardian of a participant) in one or more programs provided by the counties or NCHC.

I am an employee of a county or NCHC.

I am involved in the legal system (judge, law enforcement, attorney).

I am a consumer advocate.

I work for an agency that partners with one of the county social services departments.

I am an interested community member.

Other (explain)

### Option 1—Status Quo

- What do you see as the most important advantages of the way that human services are currently delivered in the three-county area?

- What do you see as the most important disadvantages of the way that human services are currently delivered in the three-county area?
- Please discuss how you interact with the current system. In your daily interactions with the system, what works well and what does not work well?

#### Option 2—Collaboration Advisory Committee

- What are the major opportunities associated with this option?
- What are potential barriers or challenges associated with this option?
- What are particularly important issues for the Task Force to keep in mind as it considers this option?

Option 3—Multi-County Human Services Department through NCHC

- What are the major opportunities associated with this option?
- What are potential barriers or challenges associated with this option?
- What are particularly important issues for the Task Force to keep in mind as it considers this option?

Please provide any additional comments or suggestions below.