

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
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March 19, 2012

TO: The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 2310, S.D.1 - RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES**

Hearing: Monday, March 19, 2012; 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide vision services as a benefit in the Medicaid Program.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department supports the overall concept of this bill provided its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Supplemental Budget

The Department reviewed optional Medicaid benefits and had to make difficult decisions regarding which services to continue to provide and which services to reduce or eliminate. The Department sought, in making its decision, to preserve benefits for the more vulnerable populations of children, pregnant women, and aged or disabled adults; as well as those benefits with the greatest impact on reducing morbidity and mortality for the other adults. After gathering community input statewide, the Department eliminated optometry services for the segment of the population that it was felt would be most likely to be able to afford optometry services.

The elimination of optometry services and glasses in the Medicaid program affects only non-disabled adults. However, this population will still be able to receive ophthalmology services for the treatment of eye disease. Children, individuals over age 65 years, and individuals with disabilities have no change in eye care coverage and will still be able to access and obtain the full range of optometry services and eyeglasses.

Restoration of the optometry services for the affected population would require \$838,782 in general funds, a revised number based on enrollment increases and proposed benefit expansion for adults in QUEST-ACE and QUEST-Net to be the same as for those in QUEST.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.