



OPE Update

OFFICE OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS
IDAHO LEGISLATURE

DECEMBER 2011



Happy Holidays!

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Reflections from the Director

The 2012 Legislative session will be my 10th session—absolutely unbelievable! It has been nothing short of a tremendous privilege and honor to serve the Idaho Legislature and the wonderful people of Idaho.

Idaho was totally new to me when I came to Boise from Olympia nine years ago. I did not know what to expect. In fact, a seasoned veteran of the legislative process in Washington said to me, “What the hell do you know about the Idaho Legislature? They will have you for lunch.” Contrary to this doomsday scenario, people inside and outside the Idaho Legislature welcomed me and went out of their way to help OPE succeed.

During the past nine years, we have worked on some exciting and challenging projects. Among them were: (1) governance of EMS agencies, (2) efficiencies in the parole process, (3) operational efficiencies in the prison system, (4) the ITD performance audit, (5) K–12 funding, (6) health care costs, (7) Health and Welfare management, (8) substance abuse treatment efforts, (9) School for

the Deaf and the Blind, and (10) public school transportation.

The quality and outcomes of these studies have resulted in national honors for OPE, including

- 2011 Alva and Gunnar Myrdal Government Evaluation Award,
- 2010 NCSL Excellence in Research Methods Award, and
- 2006 NCSL Excellence in Evaluation Award.

These awards and our success in meeting the Legislature’s information needs could not have been possible without the support of legislative leadership, JLOC, individual legislators, LSO staff, the Governor’s office, and state agencies. The hard work of OPE staff and their commitment to the concept of good government have also been key to nine wonderful years at OPE. I look forward to serving the Legislature and the people of Idaho for many more years.

Merry Christmas and a joyous holiday season.

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee (JLOC), 2011–2012

Sen. Elliot Werk (D), Co-chair
Sen. James C. Hammond (R)
Sen. Dean M. Mortimer (R)
Sen. Michelle Stennett (D)

Rep. Clifford R. Bayer (R), Co-chair
Rep. Maxine T. Bell (R)
Rep. Elaine Smith (D)
Rep. Shirley G. Ringo (D)

Recently Completed Reports

Equity in Higher Education Funding

Released November 2011

The approach used to fund Idaho's four-year higher education institutions has not worked to resolve stakeholder concerns about equity. Stakeholders have long expressed concern that the funding levels among the institutions are not equitable, but they have not been able to find a resolution. We found that the decades-old debate has occurred within a framework that does not answer key policy questions about equity.

Until the State Board of Education defines a standard for equity, it cannot determine whether differences present in per student funding levels among the institutions constitute inequity. We recommended that the board develop criteria for defining equity and then develop a plan based on those criteria to correct for any inequity should it exist. We will follow-up on the board's progress in one year.

Distribution and Sale of Liquor in Idaho

Follow-up Report

Released November 2011

The division needs to step up efforts to evaluate all state-operated stores to see whether stores would benefit from conversion, expansion, relocation, or closure. The original report found the division could maximize profits by converting 13 state-operated stores to contracted stores. This conversion could save the state \$700,000 annually in operating and personnel costs.

Implementation of this recommendation becomes more important with the recent privatization of Washington's liquor system. Idaho could potentially see a drop in profit for stores along the Washington border if the newly privatized markets compete with Idaho's liquor prices. We will conduct a second follow-up review in one year to determine the division's progress.

Idaho's End-Stage Renal Disease Program

Released November 2011

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation lacked oversight, procedures, and safeguards necessary to enforce eligibility requirements of the end-stage renal disease program. Consequently, some participants have received payments for services they were not eligible to receive.

When the program was established in 1970 within the division, other forms of assistance did not exist. Today, Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance companies cover the cost of most end-stage renal disease expenses. As a result, the program may no longer be relevant because other forms of financial assistance are available. The Legislature may wish to consider three options for the future of the program:

- Phase out the program gradually
- Keep the program intact
- Move the program to the Department of Health and Welfare

We will be conducting a follow-up review in three months on division operations.

OPE and Social Media

As technologies evolve, we recognize that people consume their internet content through a variety of ways, and we want to ensure that our content is available on multiple social media platforms.

In 2011, OPE began using social media as a tool to disseminate information to those interested in our evaluation work. Legislators, media, and the general public will find links to OPE publications, news releases, and other germane information on the following social media websites:

[Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Facebook](#) [Google+](#)

Upcoming Evaluation and Follow-up Reports

Barriers to Postsecondary Education

Tentative Release in January 2012

Given Idaho's relatively low rate of postsecondary education, we are studying factors that affect high school graduates when making decisions about whether to pursue training or education beyond high school. We are evaluating the role of the state and other organizations in encouraging additional education and weighing the alignment of Idaho educational goals with employment projections.

Lottery Operations

Tentative Release in January 2012

The Idaho State Lottery generates revenue for the state through the sale of games. We will evaluate the Lottery to determine whether it performs according to state law and whether it maximizes revenues. Our study will look at whether operations, advertising, and retailer compensation are within statutory limits. We will also determine whether the current structure for charitable gaming activities is efficient and understandable.

Delays in Medicaid Claims Processing

Follow-up Report

Tentative Release in January 2012

We will examine whether Molina Healthcare, Inc. has streamlined communication with providers, improved data collection efforts to better measure system performance, and adequately tested system fixes before implementation. We will also look at the Department of Health and Welfare's management of system operations payments, quality assurance measures, and Molina's implementation efforts.

Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho's Parole Process Follow-up Interim Update

Tentatively Scheduled for January 2012

In our 2010 report on the parole process, we made 26 recommendations to help improve efficiencies. The Department of Correction and the Commission of Pardons and Parole, in coordination with our office, will provide an interim update to JLOC on their progress.

Creating an Efficiency Commission

Tentative Release in February 2012

Recent challenges in balancing the state budget have affected agency services provided to citizens. The creation of an efficiency commission could help the state examine and recommend changes to improve Idaho's fiscal outlook. We are looking at what can be learned from other states and Idaho's own special topic commissions. The study will identify best practices and the benefits or potential outcomes of an efficiency commission. It will also explore what other options exist for accomplishing the intent of an efficiency commission.

Idaho Transportation Department Performance Audit, Follow-up Report

Tentative Release in March 2012

We will look at the department's progress in implementing the remaining recommendations from this 2009 performance audit: (1) overseeing funding for local roads, (2) finalizing strategic planning, (3) integrating planning processes, and (4) urging decision makers to continue to seek sources of revenues for funding preservation and maintenance.

Requests for Evaluation

JLOC is taking legislator requests for evaluations. If you have a concern about a specific area of state government that would benefit from an in-depth evaluation, we invite you to submit a request to JLOC for its consideration. OPE will be happy to work with you if you need assistance in drafting the request.

National Recognitions

OPE Staff

Director

Rakesh Mohan

Administrative Coordinator

Margaret Campbell

Principal Evaluator

Amy Lorenzo

Senior Evaluators

Maureen Brewer

Hannah Crumrine

Lance McCleve

Jared Tatro

Bryon Welch

OPE received the [2011 Alva and Gunnar Myrdal Government Evaluation Award](#), presented by the [American Evaluation Association](#), which recognized an individual or group whose evaluation work was highly influential in the government context.

OPE also received three awards at the 2011 annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures in San Antonio, Texas:

- 2011 Impact Award, National Legislative Program Evaluation Society, for the report *Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho's Parole Process*, which documented programmatic improvements and public policy impact.
- 2011 Notable Documents Award, National Conference of State Legislatures, Legislative Research Librarians, for two reports:

Distribution and Sale of Liquor in Idaho
Governance of EMS Agencies in Idaho

Both reports were recognized for “providing substantive information on contemporary issues of interest to legislators.”

Upcoming Evaluation and Follow-up Reports—cont.

Coordination and Delivery of Senior Services in Idaho, Follow-up Report

Tentative Release in March 2012

Idaho's senior population is anticipated to grow by 147 percent over the next 20 years. The successful delivery of future senior services hinges on a statewide collaborative approach among the Idaho Commission on Aging, six area agencies on aging (AAAs), and local providers.

We will look at the commission's efforts to (1) improve data management and contract oversight, (2) provide the AAAs with more direction in how they use state funds, and (3) expand its performance measures to better reflect the outcomes of successful service delivery efforts.

Operational Efficiencies in Idaho's Prison Systems, Follow-up Report

Tentative Release in February/March 2012

Our 2010 study found that Idaho's prison system faced a variety of challenges including aging and outdated facility infrastructure, limited staffing levels, compliance with national standards, and growing operating budget shortfalls. We suggested a strategic approach to both modernize Idaho's prison facilities and improve security staffing. The follow-up review will assess the state's efforts to address these recommendations.

All of our reports are available on our website:

www.idaho.gov/ope