

Preliminary Performance Review

**James “Tiger” Morton
Catastrophic Illness Commission**

**The James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic
Illness Commission Has Provided Economic
Assistance to Individuals Facing Catastrophic
Illness as Required By *West Virginia*
Code §16-5Q**

**The James “Tiger” Morton Illness Commission
Has Not Received Donations or Gifts or
Applied for Grant Funding As Permitted By
*West Virginia Code §16-5Q***



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John Sylvia
Director

July 25, 2004

The Honorable Edwin J. Bowman
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129 West Circle Drive
Weirton, West Virginia 26062

The Honorable J.D. Beane
House of Delegates
Building 1, Room E-213
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
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Dear Chairs:

Pursuant to the West Virginia Sunset Law, we are transmitting a Preliminary Performance Review of the *James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission*, which will be presented to the Joint Committee on Government Operations on Sunday, July 25, 2004. The issues covered herein are "The James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission Has Provided Economic Assistance to Individuals Facing Catastrophic Illness as Required By West Virginia Code §16-5Q;" and "The James "Tiger" Morton Illness Commission Has Not Received Donations or Gifts or Applied for Grant Funding As Permitted By West Virginia Code §16-5Q."

We transmitted a draft copy of the report to the Catastrophic Illness Commission on July 9, 2004. We held an Exit Conference with the Catastrophic Illness Commission on July 14, 2004. We received the agency response on July 15, 2004.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of John Sylvia in cursive script.
John Sylvia

JS/tlc

Joint Committee on Government and Finance

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Executive Summary

Issue 1: The James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission Has Provided Economic Assistance to Individuals Facing Catastrophic Illness as Required By *West Virginia Code* §16-5Q

Since 2000 the commission has assisted 634 individuals suffering from catastrophic illness with 96.5% of them being awarded \$25,000 or less. A catastrophic illness means that there is imminent risk of death if assistance is not immediately offered.

Applications are completed over the telephone by the commission’s executive director. She also reviews the application for Medicaid and determines if the patient meets the required “spend down” eligibility, reports that the individual has reached the acute phase of a catastrophic illness and has exhausted all other means of assistance. If funding is available, there is a determination of eligibility and award. The fund provides economic assistance to individuals who have suffered a catastrophic injury and have met *the required spend down for Medicaid eligibility to the extent that household income was reduced to less than one hundred percent of the federal poverty level* [CSR §72-1-5].

Under the commission’s legislative rule, the executive director alone can award assistance to anyone receiving no more than \$25,000. This means that only 3.5% of the commission’s awards involve decision-making by commission members. This causes some concern regarding the commission’s internal controls related to the disbursement of funds.

Under the commission’s legislative rule, the executive director alone can award assistance to anyone receiving no more than \$25,000. This means that only 3.5% of the commission’s awards involve decision-making by commission members. This causes some concern regarding the commission’s internal controls related to the disbursement of funds. The executive director alone makes award decisions in all cases until total expenditures exceed \$25,000. The executive director is also the only commission representative who approves United Way expenditures and payments from the commission’s state MasterCard account. The fact that the executive director is in the position to make awards on her own for up to \$25,000, coupled with the fact that she approves all expenditures, presents the possibility that funds could be spent inappropriately. This is a unique organizational arrangement in comparison to most other state agencies. The Legislative Auditor is not implying that improper expenditures have occurred, but the procedures in place that give so much discretion to one individual are inadequate to discourage such conduct. The criteria for making economic awards does appear to be sound and based on need so the Legislative Auditor’s Office does not question the quality of the executive director’s decisions in making awards.

Issue 2: The James “Tiger” Morton Illness Commission Has Not Received Donations or Gifts or Applied for Grant Funding As Permitted By *West Virginia Code §16-5Q*

West Virginia Code §16-5Q-1 permits the commission to accept donations or gifts and apply for grant funding to supplement the fund’s general revenue appropriation. The Legislative Auditor’s Office contacted the commission’s executive director to determine if the commission has utilized any of these alternative sources of funding. In a letter dated June 8, 2004, she stated:

The commission does not appear to have previously given any attention to the possibility of obtaining grant funding. The commission should consider applying for grant funding after a survey of available grant programs.

The commission does not apply for grant funding and the commission has the capacity to solicit funds but to date has not received any dollars outside the state budget allocation.

The commission does not appear to have previously given any attention to the possibility of obtaining grant funding. The commission should consider applying for grant funding after a survey of available grant programs. **The Legislative Auditor recommends that the commission conduct research into available grant programs and determine if the fund qualifies to apply for this type of funding.**

The Legislative Auditor recommends that the Legislature consider adding a donation line item to state income tax return forms for the James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission as a way to augment its budget.

The Legislative Auditor’s Office encourages the commission to seek various means by which it can obtain additional funds to augment its annual appropriation. The Legislative Auditor’s Office has reviewed income tax returns from each state and identified one means by which donations can be solicited. All but six states (Arkansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and Virginia) use line items on income tax returns to solicit donations for various charitable causes. West Virginia currently has a donation line on its forms for the West Virginia Children’s Trust Fund, which funds the prevention of child abuse and neglect. **The Legislative Auditor recommends that the Legislature consider adding a donation line item to state income tax return forms for the James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission.**

Recommendations

1. *The Legislative Auditor recommends that the Legislature consider continuing the James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission.*
2. *The Department of Health and Human Resources should revise the James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission’s legislative rules to improve internal controls related to expenditures.*
3. *The Legislative Auditor recommends that the commission conduct research into available grant programs and determine if the fund qualifies to apply for this type of funding.*
4. *The Legislature should consider adding a line item to state income tax return forms for donations to the James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Fund.*

Review Objective, Scope and Methodology

Objective

The Preliminary Performance Evaluation of the James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission was conducted in accordance with *WVC* §4-10-4. The Legislature created the James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission in 1999 in order to provide economic assistance to the citizens of the state facing catastrophic illness. The objectives of this evaluation are as follows:

1. Determine if the commission provides assistance to individuals suffering from catastrophic illness as required by *WVC* §16-5Q-1.
2. Determine if the commission’s operating funds are managed with adequate internal controls as measured by the criteria for disbursing funds.
3. Determine if there would be significant adverse effects on the public health if the commission were abolished.

Scope

The scope of the review extends from calendar year 2000 through June 2004. The Legislative Auditor’s Office did not conduct a financial audit of the commission’s expenditures.

Methodology

The commission provided all data on expenditures and the number of clients assisted or referred to other programs. The commission also provided information on the steps involved in the eligibility process, five sample case records, methods by which the program is publicized and sources of referrals. The Legislative Auditor’s Office also examined the income tax return forms for all fifty states to identify frequently used types of charitable donation line items. The West Virginia Tax Department provided data on tax return form donations to the West Virginia Children’s Trust Fund since calendar year 1999.

Issue 1

The James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission Has Provided Economic Assistance to Individuals Facing Catastrophic Illness as Required By *West Virginia Code §16-5Q-1*.

Issue Summary

The James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission has provided economic assistance to 634 individuals facing the costs of catastrophic illnesses since it began operations in 2000. The commission’s expenditures have totaled \$3.2 million. It currently receives a legislative appropriation of \$940,000 annually. The fund meets the needs of those persons who are not eligible for Medicaid benefits, yet cannot afford to pay for various costs associated with catastrophic illnesses. These would include certain medical treatments not covered by Medicaid or related non-medical costs, such as travel out of state for medical treatment. The commission’s internal controls with respect to making expenditures permit the executive director alone to make awards for up to \$25,000 and approve all United Way and state MasterCard expenditures. While the Legislative Auditor’s Office has not identified any inappropriate expenditures, the level of discretion given to the executive director would permit them to occur.

The fund meets the needs of those persons who are not eligible for Medicaid benefits, yet cannot afford to pay for various costs associated with catastrophic illnesses.

Steps Involved In Assisting Clients

There are several steps in determining eligibility to obtain economic assistance from the commission. A catastrophic illness must exist which means that there is imminent risk of death if assistance does not occur. The commission’s executive director described the process:

In order to be considered for assistance, all individuals must complete the application process for West Virginia Medicaid. If denied Medicaid assistance, we then review the application and determine the assets available to the individual per the legislative rule (Title 72). There are no income guidelines due to the special nature of catastrophic illness, only asset guidelines.

According to the commission's legislative rule CSR §72-1-5, subsection 1 through 3:

An applicant is eligible for assistance if the commission determines that the applicant has a catastrophic illness, needs approved care and services during the acute phase of the catastrophic illness and meets the required spend down for Medicaid eligibility to the extent that household income is reduced to less than one hundred percent of the federal poverty level.

Applications are completed over the telephone by the commission's executive director. She also reviews the application for Medicaid and determines if the patient meets the required "spend down" eligibility, reports that the individual has reached the acute phase of a catastrophic illness and has exhausted all other means of assistance. If funding is available, there is a determination of eligibility and award. The fund provides economic assistance to individuals who have suffered a catastrophic injury and have met *the required spend down for Medicaid eligibility to the extent that household income was reduced to less than one hundred percent of the federal poverty level* [CSR §72-1-5]. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Health Resources and Services Administration, identifies the term "spend down" with its definition of "Medically Needy":

Since 2000 the commission has assisted 634 individuals with 96.5% of them being awarded \$25,000 or less.

The 'Medically Needy' category provides for a different method of determining eligibility, based on actual medical expenses incurred by an individual. Medically needy persons are individuals who fall within one of the mandatory or optional eligibility groups, but have income and resources that would make them ineligible, except when the cost of their medical care is taken into account. When they incur medical expenses they 'spend down' their income, and become eligible for the balance of the eligibility period from the point in time they spend down their income to the eligibility level. The process begins again at the beginning of the next state-defined eligibility period.

On all eligibility and award decisions, the executive director will communicate with the applicant. Table 1 lists the total number of clients who have received assistance from the commission since 2000, organized by the amount received. Since 2000 the commission has assisted 634 individuals with 96.5% of them being awarded \$25,000 or less.

| Table 1 | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Number of Clients By Award Size | | | | |
| Year | Under \$25,000 | \$25,001-50,000 | \$50,000-75,000 | \$75,001 and up |
| 2000 | 18 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2001 | 208 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| 2002 | 302 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| 2003 | 51 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 2004 | 33 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 612 | 16 | 4 | 2 |

Source: the James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission

The commission's legislative rule CSR §72-1-8, subsection 4a and 4b contains a number of provisions that specify who makes decisions regarding awards:

1. *Decisions of eligibility approved care and services and awards shall be made by the executive director when the application is for twenty-five thousand dollars or less;*
2. *...the executive director and one Commission member when the application is for between twenty-five thousand (\$25,000) and fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000);*
3. *...the executive director, one Commission member and the Commission Chair when the application is for between fifty thousand one dollars (\$50,001) and seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000);*
4. *...a majority of the Commission when the application is for more than seventy-five thousand dollars.*

The executive director's experience with catastrophic illness claims usually permits her to plan for larger expenditures:

When an application comes in I consider the amount of bills that will be paid. Most cases start out under \$25,000 and if

the bills come in and we start to pay more than that I contact a board member for further approval. I know from the diagnosis usually what to expect.

Under the commission's legislative rule, the executive director alone can award assistance to anyone receiving no more than \$25,000.

As already stated, 612 out of a total of 634 economic assistance cases, or 96.5% of clients, received no more than \$25,000. Under the commission's legislative rule, the executive director alone can award assistance to anyone receiving no more than \$25,000. This means that only 3.5% of the commission's awards involve decision-making by commission members. This causes some concern regarding the commission's internal controls related to the disbursement of funds. The executive director alone makes award decisions in all cases until total expenditures exceed \$25,000. The executive director is also the only commission representative who approves United Way expenditures and payments from the commission's state MasterCard account. The fact that the executive director is in the position to make awards on her own for up to \$25,000, coupled with the fact that she approves all expenditures, presents the possibility that funds could be spent inappropriately. This is an unique organizational arrangement in comparison to most other state agencies. The Legislative Auditor is not implying that improper expenditures have occurred, but the procedures in place that give so much discretion to one individual are inadequate to discourage such conduct. The criteria for making economic awards does appear to be sound and based on need so the Legislative Auditor's Office does not question the quality of the executive director's decisions in making awards.

The executive director described the process by which the commission disburses funds:

Medical claims are paid at the current Medicaid rate and are processed through the same fiscal agent services contract currently in use by the Bureau for Medical Services-Unisys. A grant account has been established through the United Way of Kanawha Valley to disburse money for housing, meals and COBRA insurance payments. A specific MasterCard account (which is controlled by the Executive Director) [the State Travel Management Card] is used for payment of housing needs. Cash payments are only dispersed to the applicant only in special circumstances.

The Commission Provides Medical and Non-Medical Assistance

As mentioned earlier, the commission also provides non-medical assistance to its clients (see Table 2). Table 2 lists the number of individuals

The commission has determined that 1,399 applicants were eligible for assistance from other programs and referred them to these programs.

assisted since 2000 according to the type of assistance provided. Since 2000, the commission has assisted 69 individuals by using the MasterCard account or through the United Way. United Way expenditures have totaled \$170,000 for housing, meals and COBRA insurance. MasterCard account expenditures, which the commission uses to assist individuals with housing needs, have totaled \$36,134 for the same time period. The commission has determined that 1,399 applicants were eligible for assistance from other programs and referred them to these programs.

| Year | Number of Clients Receiving Assistance Associated With Medical Costs | Medical Expenditures | Number of Clients Receiving Non-Medical Assistance | Non-Medical Expenditures | Total Expenditures | Number of Applicants Referred to Other Programs |
|---------------|---|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 2000 | 14 | \$0 | 5 | \$10,000 | \$10,000 | 25 |
| 2001 | 196 | \$335,311 | 18 | \$45,667 | \$380,977 | 314 |
| 2002 | 292 | \$1,735,192 | 20 | \$72,443 | \$1,807,635 | 530 |
| 2003 | 39 | \$721,492 | 16 | \$37,663 | \$759,156 | 368 |
| 2004 | 24 | \$263,819 | 10 | \$40,362 | \$304,181 | 162 |
| Totals | 565 | \$3,055,814 | 69 | \$206,134 | \$3,261,948 | 1,399 |

Source: James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Fund

The Commission Provides Information on the Fund to Health Care Professionals Who, In Turn, Refer Applicants for Assistance

The commission's executive director described the manner in which the commission disseminates information to members of the health care community:

The program has been publicized through letters to Department of Health and Human Resources Community Service Managers, county health departments, home health care agencies, primary care facilities and hospitals. Information also appears in the Women's Resource

Directory and an article on the Commission was printed in the Charleston Gazette.

While the executive director is the commission's only staff member, her background in social work enables her to attend workshops and conferences, as well as networking with health care facilities. Referrals, therefore, come from a wide variety of individuals such as:

...Medicaid workers, doctors' offices, family members, legislators and hospitals.

The James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Fund is a Type of Program Unique to West Virginia

The Legislative Auditor's Office attempted to identify programs similar to the James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission. Only one comparable program exists.

The Legislative Auditor's Office attempted to identify programs similar to the James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission. Only one comparable program exists. New Jersey has the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund. This program only assists families with children under 18 years of age who suffer from catastrophic illness. West Virginia's program provides benefits to individuals of all ages. It receives a legislative appropriation of \$940,000 annually.

Conclusion

The James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Fund fills the role for which it was created. The fund provides economic assistance to individuals who have suffered a catastrophic injury and have met the required spend-down for Medicaid. Clients receive assistance for approved care and services during the acute phase of a catastrophic illness and have exhausted all other means of assistance. The Legislative Auditor's Office has been unable to identify any other state with a program that is exactly like the commission. **Because of the commission's unique function in providing assistance to those who are ineligible to receive assistance from other programs (634 at the time of this report), the Legislative Auditor recommends continuing the James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission.**

Recommendations

1. *The Legislative Auditor recommends that the Legislature consider continuing the James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission.*
2. *The Department of Health and Human Resources should revise the James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission’s legislative rules to improve internal controls related to expenditures.*

Issue 2

The James “Tiger” Morton Illness Commission Has Not Received Donations or Gifts or Applied for Grant Funding As Permitted By *West Virginia Code §16-5Q-1*.

West Virginia Code §16-5Q-1 permits the commission to accept donations or gifts and apply for grant funding to supplement the fund’s general revenue appropriation. The Legislative Auditor’s Office contacted the commission’s executive director to determine if the commission has utilized any of these alternative sources of funding. In a letter dated June 8, 2004, she stated:

The commission does not appear to have previously given any attention to the possibility of obtaining grant funding.

The commission does not apply for grant funding and the commission has the capacity to solicit funds but to date has not received any dollars outside the state budget allocation.

The commission does not appear to have previously given any attention to the possibility of obtaining grant funding. The commission should consider applying for grant funding after a survey of available grant programs. **The Legislative Auditor recommends that the commission conduct research into available grant programs and determine if the fund qualifies to apply for this type of funding.**

State Income Tax Returns As A Possible Source of Donations

The Legislative Auditor’s Office encourages the commission to seek various means by which it can obtain additional funds to augment its annual appropriation. The Legislative Auditor’s Office has reviewed income tax returns from each state and identified one means by which donations can be solicited. All but six states (Arkansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and Virginia) use line items on income tax returns to solicit donations for various charitable causes. West Virginia currently has a donation line on its forms for the West Virginia Children’s Trust Fund, which funds the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Table 3 shows total contributions to the West Virginia Children’s Trust Fund during recent fiscal years.

Table 3
Contributions to the West
Virginia Children’s Trust Fund:
1999-2004

| | |
|-------|----------|
| 1999 | \$70,787 |
| 2000 | \$69,553 |
| 2001 | \$61,405 |
| 2002 | \$54,685 |
| 2003 | \$71,870 |
| 2004* | \$64,000 |

Source: West Virginia Tax Department
**Estimated total contributions*

The Legislative Auditor recommends that the Legislature consider adding a donation line item to state income tax return forms for the James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission.

The most common charitable causes for which states solicit donations include child abuse prevention, domestic abuse prevention, disease research, wildlife funds and veterans’ programs. Tax return forms from states surrounding West Virginia provide examples of such charitable causes. Pennsylvania has donation line items for the Wild Resource Conservation Fund, United States Olympic Committee and the Korea/Vietnam Memorial. Kentucky allows individuals to contribute to the Nature and Wildlife Fund, Child Victims’ Trust Fund, U.S. Olympic Committee and the Veterans’ Program Trust Contribution. Ohio’s tax return form has two donation line items for natural areas and wildlife conservation. Maryland collects donations for the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund as well as the Fair Campaign Financing Fund. North Dakota is the only state the Legislative Auditor’s Office identified which allows individuals to donate with either deductions from income tax refunds or additions to tax payments. Both Alabama and California had eleven line items that could be used for donations to various funds such as the Child Abuse Trust Fund in Alabama or the California Firefighters’ Memorial Fund in California. Clearly, many states collect donations for a wide range of charitable causes, frequently providing more donation choices than West Virginia currently does. **The Legislative Auditor recommends that the Legislature consider adding a donation line item to state income tax return forms for the James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission.**

Conclusion

The commission's executive director has confirmed that the commission does not apply for grant funding and has never received any donated funds. The commission should give serious consideration to available grant programs and determine if the James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Fund qualifies for this type of funding. In order to obtain additional funding for charitable causes, most states have line items for donation purposes on their respective income tax return forms. While no other state has a fund similar to the James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Fund, it would be an appropriate additional choice for those wishing to donate from either their tax refund, or if they wish, to add a donation to their tax payment.

Recommendations

3. *The Legislative Auditor recommends that the commission conduct research into available grant programs and determine if the fund qualifies to apply for this type of funding.*
4. *The Legislature should consider adding a line item to state income tax return forms for donations to the James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Fund.*

Appendix A: Transmittal Letter

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE *Performance Evaluation and Research Division*

Building 1, Room W-314
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0610
(304) 347-4890
(304) 347-4939 FAX



John Sylvia
Director

July 9, 2004

Catastrophic Illness Commission
Genie Hupp, M.S.W., Executive Director
350 Capitol Street, Room 537
Charleston, WV 25301

Dear Ms. Hupp:

This is to transmit a draft copy of the Preliminary Performance Evaluation of the James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission. This report is scheduled to be presented during the July 25, 2004 interim meeting of the Joint Committee on Government Operations. We will inform you of the exact time and location once the information becomes available. It is expected that a representative from your agency be present at the meeting to orally respond to the report and answer any questions the committee may have.

We would like to schedule an exit conference to discuss any concerns you may have with the report, during the week of July 12th-16th. Tuesday, July 13th would be our preferred date. We need your written response by noon on Friday, July 16, 2004, in order to include it in the final report. If your agency intends to distribute additional material to committee members at the meeting, please contact the House Government Organization staff at 340-3192 by Thursday, July 22, 2004, to make arrangements. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of John Sylvia in cursive script.
John Sylvia

c: Paul L. Nusbaum, Secretary

Joint Committee on Government and Finance

James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission Page 23

Appendix B: Agency Response



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

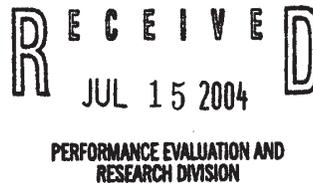
Bob Wise
Governor

Catastrophic Illness Commission
State Capitol Complex, Building 3, Room 231
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
Telephone: (304) 558-6073 FAX: (304) 558-6640

Paul L. Nusbaum
Secretary

July 15, 2004

John Sylvia, Director
Performance Evaluation and Research Division
West Virginia Legislature
Building 1, Room W-314
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, West Virginia 25305



Dear Mr. Sylvia:

The James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission accepts the preliminary performance review completed by the Office of the Legislative Auditor. The Commission continues to review the recommendations and analysis contained in the report. This report has proven valuable to the Commission in its effort to improve its performance.

Issue Area #1: The James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission Has Provided Economic Assistance to Individuals Facing Catastrophic Illness as Required by West Virginia Code §16-5Q-1

The Commission acknowledges and accepts that it needs to improve internal controls related to expenditures. The Commission proposes that the Department of Health and Human Resources and the Commission's Board work in conjunction to strengthen internal controls to monitor expenditures through internal policy or legislative rule.

Issue Area #2: The James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission Has Not Received Donations or Gifts or Applied for Grant Funding as Permitted by West Virginia Code §16-5Q-1

The Commission agrees that it has not pursued donations and/or grant funding. In an effort to correct this situation, the Commission will research available grant programs and determine if funding is available.

The Commission agrees with the adding a line item to the state income tax return form for donations to the James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission.

John Sylvia, Director
July 15, 2004
Page Two

Conclusion

The James "Tiger" Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission thanks the Office of the Legislative Auditor for this report. We appreciate its thoroughness and the recommendations for improvement. It identifies areas that need further attention. We have accepted them and are in the process of implementing the recommendations.

The Commission also appreciates the opportunity to respond to this report prior to its release. We are committed to continuing to assist individuals who are facing a catastrophic illness and will use the findings of the Legislative Auditor to further that mission.

Sincerely,



Regina Hupp, MSW
Executive Director

cc: Paul Nusbaum
Emily Hopta
Board Members

GH/dgg