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existing health care programs, as well as those which may develop in the future.

That idea was not readily embraced by members of the panel, many of whom argued that only those entities which sell insurance products should be regulated, while those which are not involved in the insurance industry should not be regulated.

Randel also argued that only one state agency, particularly the state insurance commission, should be charged with regulating the managed care industry. Randel pointed to the assumption that "anyone bearing risk" would be regulated to say that the insurance commission would be best suited to serve as the regulatory agency. The sharing of regulatory responsibility, Randel said, has historically led to problems in states such as California, New York and Minnesota.

According to Hartsell, his department bears the primary responsibility of enforcing regulations on the health care industry. When dealing with HMOs, he noted, the Oklahoma Insurance Commission evaluates the organizations' finances, but only makes recommendations to the health department. In Ohio, Randel said, the insurance commission would take the lead in regulation of the managed care industry and the health department would take a subservient role.

Randel said the primary regulatory focus of the legislation proposed in Ohio is solvency.

"Solvency," he said, "should be paramount in any regulatory scheme."

That, he said, is because the failure of a health care organization "is one of the worst things you can imagine."

Quality issues, Randel indicated, are important to consumers, but are best addressed by the market place, rather than by regulatory agencies.

That approach, however, Randel said, has drawn objections from those within the health care industry.

"Many of them would like to see low or no solvency requirements," said Randel.

As members turned their attention to the task force's future discussions, some reluctance was expressed about taking action without hearing from representatives of some of the health care provider groups, such as provider service networks, preferred provider organizations and others.

That desire left one major issue unresolved by the panel — a determination of what entities would be regulated under any law proposed for Oklahoma. After hearing from representatives of additional health care provider groups, the task force's members indicated that they felt they would be better suited for arriving at a decision on the issue.

In informal balloting near the end of the meeting, however, 18 of the 30 task force members attending the meeting expressed a

preference for dividing the regulatory responsibility in Oklahoma between two or more agencies, while 12 of the members expressed a preference for having only one regulatory authority.

In votes on other regulatory issues:

- Twenty-nine of the panel's members voiced support for regulations dealing with solvency;

- Twenty said the capacity to meet a network's obligations should be regulated, while 5 panel members disagreed;

- Nineteen of the panel's members said they believe provider selection and access should be regulated, compared to six who said that it should not;

- Twenty voted that the process of credentialing should be regulated, while two voted that it should not;

- Twenty-six panel members said quality assurance should be regulated;

- Twenty-seven voted that utilization review, data reporting and outcome information should also be regulated; and

- Nine said profit should be regulated by a legislatively-imposed limit, while 15 said that it should not.

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fore 1950, Walsh said, and many counties do not have the funds to build a jail. Jail standards cannot be met, he said.

Quality staff is at a critical low in most counties. Salaries are too low to draw top applicants. Seminole County pays their jailer \$1,050 per month. Deputies there draw \$1,234 per month. Sheriff Dayle James of Okmulgee hires retired jailers and deputies. They can live on the meager salary because they already draw retirement James said. Wagoner County's jailer does triple duty — as jailer, dispatcher and teletype operator — Sheriff Elmer Shepherd said.

Legislators and law enforcement officials at the meeting agreed budgets and funding for county law enforcement needs some fundamental changes. Right now, each county office — court clerk, county clerk, sheriff, appraiser and county treasurer — is apportioned a part of the millage collected in ad valorem taxes. Sheriffs' offices get one-tenth of one-tenth of the taxes collected to run two important offices — investigation and detention. If the highway patrol or Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation arrests someone, the sheriff in that county is responsible for everything that happens to that prisoner, and the cost of his keep, Sheriff Sisco said.

Compared to 1993, Walsh said, the 51 Oklahoma counties he has studied so far rank below the national average in everything. "We're probably in the bottom two or three," he said. "We need to look at where the sheriff fits in with the correctional department; make structural changes. We've allowed the infrastructure to slip so long it will take drastic measures to fix," he added.

Task force chairman Sen. Lewis Long, D-Glenpool, wanted to know what other states are doing to solve some of the same problems. Regional jails are one solution, Sheriff Glanz said, with perhaps a 48-hour holding facility in each county. An additional statewide tax, to be used just for county law enforcement was mentioned. "People are saying they want more protection and they're willing to pay for it," Sheriff Sisco said. Using statewide computer systems already in place, such as the Department of Human Services or Oklahoma libraries was a solution mentioned to take advantage of video hearings.

No matter what, Sheriff Dayle James of Okmulgee County said, "we need to keep law enforcement local." In rural counties, the sheriff is the bottom line in law enforcement, one sheriff said, "the thin blue line."

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GIT, Inc.

P.O. Box 61206

Oklahoma City, OK 73146-1206

Office (405) 528-2546

Fax (405) 521-9807

Net: gitinc@ionet.net

Web: <http://www.exoweb.com/git>

Darwin P. Maxey, Publisher

Mary Millen, Editor

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