

MINUTES
HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, March 05, 2014

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW20

MEMBERS: Chairman Wood(27), Vice Chairman Perry, Representative(s) Hancey, Henderson, Hixon, Malek, Morse, Romrell, Vander Woude, Rusche, Chew

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

GUESTS: Dawn Phipps, Idaho Resident; Mike Brassey, St. Luke's Health System; Kathie Garrett and Kathie Mercer, NAMI Idaho; Jim Baugh, DRI; Dick Armstrong, Russ Baron, Kristin Matthews, Lori Wolff, DHW; Jared Tatro, Legislation Services Office, Budget; Corey Surber, Saint Alphonsus; Amber Pence, City of Boise; Steve Millard, IHA; Tony Poinelli, IAC; Julie Zicha, Ryan's Rainbow; Elizabeth Criner, NWFPA / Winco; Jane Wittmeyer, Darigold

Chairman Wood(27) called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Chairman Wood(27) announced **S 1266aa,aa** will be heard at the Committee meeting tomorrow, February 06, 2014.

S 1352: **Richard Armstrong**, Director, Department of Health and Welfare (DHW), presented **S 1352**, legislation to establish Community Crisis Centers as part of the overall plan to upgrade and improve the state behavioral health services.

When confronted with individuals in crisis, law enforcement can either charge and jail them, or take them to a hospital Emergency Room (ER), where the officer must sit and wait while the individual is assessed. Both methods are inefficient and expensive.

Ross Edmunds, Administrator, Division of Behavioral Health, DHW, explained individuals with serious mental illness tend to seek help after they are in crisis. The Crisis Center model provides an appropriate venue for law enforcement and voluntary admittance.

The Centers can be located in existing, empty buildings. Geographically the Centers are most successful when they are located next to a hospital, for interplay between the two facilities.

Staffing consists of professional nurses, licensed masters level mental health clinicians, and certified peer specialists who have had behavioral health disorders themselves. There is no physician overseer, but a protocol is established for medical condition limits. There is also a physician on the Board.

Although open 24 hours, seven days a week, the longest Centers will keep an individual is 23.59 hours. Once evaluated, the discharge planning begins for transition back into their community with ongoing care. This legislation provides an opportunity for community input for a functioning Center, but is not an architectural design.

Director Armstrong added the DHW will review quality standards, not run the facilities. A facility operator, who is an independent contractor from the community, will be selected. The community is expected to fund and maintain the Centers in partnership with Hospitals and other resources. DHW caseworkers and other providers will visit the facilities to handle ongoing care planning.

Answering questions, **Director Armstrong** said ongoing care will be delivered in the private sector. The Centers will stabilize, assess, and then discharge individuals to an appropriate care facility, based on the individual's resources. The sooner individuals are connected with a system of care and ongoing stability in their own environment, the better future crises are minimized.

Mr. Edmunds explained Idaho's behavioral health system is different from other states, as is this program's creation, which varies from centers begun in their communities. The operating contractors are expected to come from the community delivery system. Contributions to the Centers' operations can be through a variety of services, such as laundry and meals.

Kathie Garrett, NAMI, testified **in support** of **S 1352**. She said the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Learning (WICHE) report of Idaho's behavioral health system proposed a community mental health system. The Centers could be a hub of service activities currently very limited in Idaho, while saving law enforcement and incarceration dollars.

Jim Baugh, Disability Rights of Idaho, testified **in support** of **S 1352** and the formation of the Crisis Centers.

Julie Zicha, Ryan's Rainbow Connection, testified **in support** of **S 1352**, sharing the story of her son's suicide, loss of Medicaid coverage, medication, and counseling caused high risk activities, arrest, and his suicide decision. She said an option like Crisis Centers might have made a difference. Idaho consistently ranks high for suicides and attempted suicides, especially with our youth. At any age, a Crisis Center providing help beyond arrest or hospitalization, would be amazing.

John Watts, Idaho Primary Care Association, testified **in support** of **S 1352**, stating they are in a position to help the state and DHW with this measure, if it passes.

Steve Millard, Idaho Hospital Association, testified **in support** of **S 1352**. He said they have concerns about the skeletal nature of this legislation. However, since the entire system is in a flux of change, the Centers will fit the system mold.

For the record, no one else indicated their desire to testify.

MOTION:

Rep. Chew made a motion to send **S 1352** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Rep. Vander Woude stated his discomfort with the lack of community participation guidelines. References to a fee determination scheduled suggest a fee will be collected, without specification. He agrees with the need, but is unsure how it will all go together.

Responding further to questions, **Mr. Edmunds** said the Centers will not be self sufficient. References to fees identify an opportunity for people to contribute to their own care, if possible. The details for each Center will be developed in the Request For Quote (RFQ) process when the contractors explain how they will accomplish what they are proposing.

Chairman Wood(27) said behavioral health delivery systems will always require some sort of Crisis Center for Idahoans remaining a part of Medicaid. Understanding the concerns expressed about the lack of detail, he has an experienced-based comfort level with this legislation and will be supporting the motion.

VOTE ON MOTION:

Chairman Wood(27) called for a vote on the motion to send **S 1352** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Vander Woude** asked to be recorded as voting **NAY.** **Chairman Wood(27)** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 565:

Rep. Christy Perry, presented **H 565**, directing the DHW to institute a Food Stamp and Special Needs Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits change to a staggered ten day distribution, as determined the best method by the DHW. The Department of Agriculture Food Stamp Bonus Funds are to be used for the implementation. If no performance bonus is received, current funding will be used. Implementation completion is set for December 31, 2015.

The current single date issuance, which coincides with other program payments, causes a one-day convergence of participants and non participants, which is detrimental to producers, suppliers, and grocery retailers.

Responding to questions, **Rep. Perry** said the staggered issuance is tied to the last number of a participant's year of birth.

Richard Armstrong, Director, DHW, testified **in opposition** to **H 565** because it conflicts with top state and Department priorities with mandated completion in 2015 and lacks assured funding.

He explained how the top states in each of three categories receive the Department of Agriculture SNAP performance bonus. Idaho has performed so well in the past that other states have adopted similar programs to improve their performances. Although a compliment, it could mean they outperform our state this year and we receive no bonus. Without the bonus they would have to extract monies from other functions within the Department. Recently the cost card parent company sold that division, which may mean cost increases.

The Your Health Idaho (YHI) integration will require the Department's focus. The marketplace service vendors have been selected. The next eight months involve the complicated task of developing the stand alone system that will roll out in November, 2014, with continued refinement into 2016. This requires so much of the Department's attention that other maintenance projects are being deferred to handle it, including other real time program updates. This also involves the same personnel who would be handling the SNAP change.

Answering questions, **Director Armstrong** said the single issuance date is easy to remember. The ten-day method, based on their date of birth, is also easy to remember, and could show on their cards. However, any change comes with a financial and manpower cost, including additional customer service.

Past conversations with retailers about cost sharing have indicated they are in agreement with the concept, but this is not contained in this proposal.

Dawn Phipps, Idaho Resident, testified **in support** of **H 565**, relaying her experience as a food stamp recipient. She said the staggering of benefits will help remove the stigma associated with recipients and "food stamp day."

Elizabeth Criner, Northwest Food Processors Association (NWFPA), testified **in support** of **H 565**, stating food processors experience significant work increases to meet the first of the month demands and are faced with storage limitations or product shortages. Urban areas can receive daily deliveries, but this becomes a problem in rural areas.

Ms. Criner responded to questions, stating the NWFPA bore cost increases when the change was made to single day issuance. They have not been approached about cost sharing.

Jane Wittmeyer, Dairigold, testified **in support** of **H 565**. She explained the member-owned coop and their facilities. They agree the current system costs fall to the producers and processors in order to compete in the market.

For the record, no one else indicated their desire to testify.

MOTION:

Rep. Hancey made a motion to send **H 565** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Rep. Rusche commented both the implementation costs, which would fall on the taxpayers, and the threat to other DHW projects are significant concerns to be considered when voting.

Rep. Morse commented this legislation is vexing because the need and desire is obvious, but the persuasion by the DHW about their budget and project list are causes for concern.

Rep. Perry answered an additional question, stating the administrative eligibility costs are separate from issuance costs. Previously when addressed, the Northwest Grocers Association (NWGA) was in support of **H 565**, and the stakeholder group, as a whole, said they would donate money to change the issuance.

Rep. Chew said she knows the ten-day issuance is the correct change. She expressed concern about the start up costs, based on the DHW estimates. Collaboration by the direct beneficiaries to help with initial costs would be of interest. She suggested a delay of this legislation would allow that discussion.

Chairman Wood(27) put the Committee at ease.

Chairman Wood(27) called the meeting back to order.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Rep. Morse made a motion to **HOLD H 565** Subject to the Call of the Chair. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Romrell** requested he be recorded as voting **NAY**.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Representative Wood(27)
Chair

Irene Moore
Secretary