

MINUTES  
**HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, March 12, 2015

**TIME:** 9:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** Room EW20

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Wood, Vice Chairman Packer, Representatives Hixon, Perry, Romrell, Vander Woude, Beyeler, Redman, Troy, Rusche, Chew

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Vander Woude, Rusche

**GUESTS:** Frede Trenkle and Art Evans, Division of Medicaid; Heather Hussey, Rachel Westman, Christina Ikard, Brittney Kuyszek, Anne Spencer, Edye Conway, Patricia Dock, Heidi Nagel, Lindsay Conant, and Amy Rohyans Sewart, Genetic Counselors; Mike Brassey, St. Luke's Health System; Toni Lawson, Idaho Hospital Assoc.; Lori Stiles, DHW.

**Chairman Wood** called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

**MOTION:** **Vice Chairman Packer** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 12 and March 5, 2015, meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**MOTION:** **Rep. Beyeler** made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2015, meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**S 1080aa:** **Sen. Janie Ward-Engelking**, presented **S 1080aa**. Genetic counselors are specialized professionals who work in various hospitals and clinical settings as part of a medical team to provide patients with valuable information, especially when dealing with decisions about surgery and the seriousness of cancer. This legislation creates a licensing system with requirements for genetic counselors.

**Heather Hussey**, Idaho Genetic Counselor, continued the presentation of **S 1080aa**. Genetic counselors are trained healthcare professionals with masters degree and recognized as a valuable, accurate, and unbiased member of a patient's healthcare team. Voluntary national certification is available.

This legislation has no state fiscal impact, because the board will be self sustaining and licensing fees are over estimated to handle the first year set up costs. Licensing assures confidence that genetic services are provided by competent professionals providing quality services.

Answering questions, **Ms. Hussey** stated genetic testing and conditions requiring genetic counseling are increasing at a rapid rate. Licensing provides a means to insure public safety.

**Rep. Romrell** commented in support of **S 1080aa**, stating the request for licensure announces this highly trained group of individuals are professionals to be recognized by the community.

Responding to additional questions, **Ms. Hussey** said the 70 immediate applicants include genetic counselors outside of the state who provide telemedicine services through laboratories. Everything genetic counselors do is in conjunction with the rest of a medical team.

Although there are different levels of degrees, only a masters degree is offered in genetic counseling. Without licensure the hospital system or practice has to require proof of expertise at hiring. Exemptions are made for persons licensed under Title 54, persons employed as genetic counselors by the federal government or federal agency, students enrolled in an accredited genetic counseling educational program, employees responsible for a facility's genetic counseling program and persons holding medical or surgical licenses.

**Amy Stewart**, Idaho Genetic Counselors, testified in support of **S 1080aa**, describing how genetic testing and counseling helped her understand test results, prevention options, and gave her information for future planning discussions with her physician.

Answering a question, **Ms. Hussey** said the current insurance billing is handled through the physician's billing code rate for genetic counseling. Licensure would allow the use of the current procedure technology (CPT) code for genetic counseling, saving money for insurance companies and patients.

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

**Sen. Ward-Engelking** discussed the amendments to the original bill that clarified an exemption for physicians. There was also a fiscal note adjustment.

**Julie Taylor**, Idaho Citizen, testified in support of **S 1080aa**. Explaining her experience with a genetic counselor, Ms. Taylor said the process was thorough and the knowledge provided relief. Those with the right credentials need to be available to give patients piece of mind.

**Rep. Beyeler**, in support of **S 1080aa**, commented that genetic markers are used in other industries. Professionalism, credibility, and continued education are important in this young field.

**MOTION:**

**Rep. Perry** made a motion to send **S 1080aa** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

**Julie Taylor**, Blue Cross of Idaho, responded to a committee question. In checking with the Blue Cross of Idaho Medical Director, the genetic counseling costs are covered before or after the deductible, depending on the patient's plan. At this time, physicians bill for genetic counseling services. Upon licensure, the counselors could do their own billing.

**Norm Varin**, Pacific Source Health Plans, answering the same question, stated the covered paid services must meet medical criteria and medical benefit. Pacific Source would not pay for services by unlicensed professionals.

Answering further questions, **Ms. Hussey**, said any genetic counselor providing services to an Idaho resident would have to be licensed in order to practice any type of telehealth medicine.

**Rep. Redman, Rep. Hixon, Rep. Troy, and Chairman Wood** commented in support of the motion. This encourages professionals in our state and provides insurance coverage. The developing correlation between human genomes and nutrition will provide improved healthcare for Idaho citizens. Previous telemedicine and medical compact discussions have highlighted the importance of using real expertise from inside or outside of Idaho.

**VOTE ON MOTION:**

**Chairman Wood** called for a vote on the motion to send **S 1080aa** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote. Chairman Wood** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**John Hill**, National Director, National Alliance for Medicaid in Education (NAME), described the organization, which advocates program integrity for school-based Medicaid reimbursement. They provide leadership, promote integrity, and facilitate the collaboration of a shared information network.

Program specific data is not collected by Medicaid or the federal government. Voluntary state survey information provides data to understand areas that need attention.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates services to students with eligible disabilities. The mandated cost reimbursement is 40%; however, most reimbursements are paid at 15%. Federal participation decline can be traced to lack of information, training, and concerns surrounding state audits that reclaim funds and impose fines. The IDEA program has been, for thirty years, funded by state dollars instead of federal funds.

Federal funds require matching state funds, local and state administration, and accurate reporting. Other states have developed collaborative and transparent processes to maximize the program, proving it is possible.

Audit exceptions occur in three ways. First, knowingly taking money for financial gain is considered fraud. Second, errors can occur from a lack of knowledge or understanding of the rules. Third, human errors can happen when completing the forms. All three exceptions require repayment of funds. For human errors, a correcting claim with the right information could be filed to legitimately get paid. Idaho is the only state that adds civil penalties, which may need review.

To enhance the state program, a checks and balances system would include definitions, increased training, and an understanding of referral of services differences. Review is needed to determine the actual program versus the stakeholder program perceptions.

This 70% services rebate is paid for by Idaho tax dollars and not being used to its full potential.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the committee the meeting was adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

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Representative Wood  
Chair

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Irene Moore  
Secretary