

MINUTES
JOINT MEETING
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE
HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Friday, February 12, 2016

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Lincoln Auditorium

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Heider, Senators Hagedorn, Martin, Lee, Harris, Schmidt and Jordan

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

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Vice Chairman Nuxoll and Senator Lodge

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chairman Heider** called the joint meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee and the House Health and Welfare Committee (Committees) to order at 8:02 a.m.

OPENING REMARKS: **Chairman Heider** introduced himself and Chairman Wood of the House Health and Welfare Committee. He stated that this is a joint meeting of both the Senate and House Health and Welfare Committees. He welcomed everyone in the audience and discussed the procedures for testifying during today's meeting. **Chairman Wood** thanked everyone in the audience for their attendance and discussed the House Health and Welfare Committee's schedule.

TESTIMONY: **Randy Nilson** testified, as read by Alta Dee Holsted, regarding his concerns about current Medicaid coverage in Idaho (see attachment 1). He indicated that the Medicaid "personal needs allowance" barely covers his cost of living, with no allowance for home maintenance or auto insurance. If allowed to keep more income, Medicaid participants could remain in their homes and communities.

Terri Sterling, Executive Director of the Idaho Cancer Action Network, testified in support of **S 1204** and **S 1205**. She expressed her concern that her federal tax dollars were being spent to provide medical coverage for individuals living in other states and asked the Legislature to approve comprehensive health care coverage for all Idahoans.

Ilene Kingery, mental health advocate, testified in support of improved psycho-social rehabilitation (PSR) services (see attachment 2). She said PSR services are often being denied, and when children are denied these vital services they often end up in the hospital or incarcerated.

Ken Olson testified in support of **S 1205** – the Healthy Idaho Plan. He read a statement on behalf of Clella Steinke, mother-in-law of Jenny Steinke, which related the story of Jenny Steinke's death as a result of asthma complications.

Michelle Gluch testified in support of **S 1205** – the Healthy Idaho Plan. She shared her family's story of living without health insurance. She stated that primary care alone is not a solution.

Kerry Hong, Director of Community and Family Justice Services for the Administrative Office of the Idaho Supreme Court, testified regarding the impact of **S 1204** and **S 1205** on the criminal justice populations (see attachment 3). Often offenders enter problem-solving courts with health concerns in addition to addiction and mental health disorders. Additionally, moderate and high-risk to recidivate offenders on probation and parole that have behavioral health treatment needs that may be going unmet. The proposed legislation would help meet the needs of these populations.

Amanda Hundt, Crisis Responder for the Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline and Board Member of the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention - Idaho Chapter, testified in support of the Idaho Suicide Prevention Plan (see attachment 4). She discussed her own experience with the suicide prevention hotline and urged the Committees to support sustainable funding for the Idaho suicide prevention hotline, the creation of an office of suicide prevention, continued youth training through funding for the Idaho lives project and a public awareness campaign to reduce the stigma of mental health issues.

Sean Nixon, Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, testified in support of funding for mental health services in Idaho. In particular, he suggested screening school-aged children and adults for trauma in order to provide mental health services for individuals before they need hospitalization.

Jennie Rylee, Volunteer for the Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline and two-time suicide attempt survivor, testified in support of the Suicide Prevention Plan and the Healthy Idaho Plan. Individuals calling the suicide hotline are homeless, unemployed, working for minimum wage, uninsured and facing existing stigmas. She told the story of a friend that recently committed suicide. The Healthy Idaho Plan can provide appropriate treatment for these individuals.

Kathy Scott, Idaho citizen, testified in support of **S 1205** – the Healthy Idaho Plan. She suggested that if Idaho accepts federal funding to support highways, education and agriculture, the State should also accept funding for comprehensive health care coverage for our citizens.

Christie Stephenson, a foster parent, testified in support of foster care reform in Idaho. She related her story of being parent to five foster children and six biological children. She discussed the hardship that her family endured when she had to relocate to Utah after losing her job.

Jim McCauley, Idaho citizen, testified in support of foster care reform in Idaho. He discussed his experience as a counselor for adults who have been traumatized as a result of their childhood experiences in the foster care system. And he suggested that this type of trauma could be prevented if the foster care system is reformed.

Nichole Ashford, employee of ResCare HomeCare Services, testified in support of increased Medicaid reimbursement rates. She discussed the services provided by home health care professionals. Low reimbursement rates make it difficult for home health care companies to stay in business and provide personal care for their participants. She stated that increased reimbursement rates would improve the lives of caregivers and participants.

Heather Mark, a former foster parent, testified in support of foster care reform in Idaho. She stated her belief that the current foster care system does not function in the best interests of foster children.

John O'Keefe, owner of a personal care services (PCS) agency, testified in support of increased Medicaid reimbursement rates. He stated that the services PCS agencies provide allow seniors to age in place and stay in home. He indicated that PCS agencies are a low-cost alternative to nursing facilities. He said the low reimbursement rates make it difficult to find caregivers to provide PCS services.

Kevin O'Sullivan, Idaho citizen, testified in support of **S 1205** – the Healthy Idaho Plan (see attachment 5). He discussed that potential benefits of providing health care coverage for all Idahoans currently in the health care gap.

Kathleen Zielinski, representing Idaho Parents Unlimited, testified regarding the consequences of mental health service reductions for children with dual-diagnosis: developmental disabilities and mental health issues (see attachment 6). She says reductions in mental health services result in regression and rage in the home, school and community. She advocated for improved mental health services in Idaho.

Rebecca Perrenoud, Chief Executive Officer of A to Z Family Services, Inc., testified regarding the consequences of mental health service reductions (see attachment 7). She recommended (i) a simple behavioral health package funded by a flat rate, (ii) looking to other countries for guidance on health care delivery and (iii) revising the accreditation requirements for mental health providers.

Lindsey Dial, Branch Manager of ResCare HomeCare of Boise, testified in support of increased Medicaid reimbursement rates (see attachment 8). She is concerned about how little caregivers are paid and the low rates make it difficult for her company to maintain caregivers. She related a story of a quadriplegic patient who has suffered due to the lack of caregivers.

Liza Long, Board Member of the National Alliance on Mental Illness - Boise, testified in support of **S 1205** – the Healthy Idaho Plan. She related her story as a mother of a child with mental illness. Mental health treatment leads to self management, recovery and hope. Individuals with serious mental illness deserve access to lifesaving quality health care.

Jodi Fulford, a foster parent and licensed counselor, testified in support of foster care reform in Idaho (see attachment 9). She related her efforts to adopt foster children. She stated that changes need to be made to the foster care system to prevent trauma in the children the system serves.

Jim Baugh, Executive Director of DisAbility Rights Idaho, testified in support of Medicaid expansion. He discussed two main groups of people with disabilities that do not have health insurance: (i) people with severe and persistent (chronic) mental illness and (ii) people who acquire a progressive condition, like cancer, and can no longer work. These people need more than primary care; they need specialty care, hospitalization and coordinated care.

Andrew Serre, foster parent, testified in support of foster care reform in Idaho. He discussed the effects of the foster care system on his foster son. The decisions made by the Department of Health and Welfare traumatized his foster son.

Lauren Necochea, Director of Idaho Voices for Children, testified in support of **S 1205** – the Healthy Idaho Plan (see attachment 10). She stated that the health care gap forces Idaho parents earning low wages to choose between working and access to health care. She noted that the Healthy Idaho Plan would strengthen the overall health care system and focus on prevention rather than pay for expensive emergency care.

Cricket Syes, a child of the foster care system, testified in support of foster care reform in Idaho. She told her experiences as a foster child. She was never able to make significant attachments to her family. She advocated for ensuring that foster children are not left in limbo and know that they are loved.

Susanne Jamison, Executive Director of the Idaho Dental Hygienists Association, testified regarding the need for a dental hygienist mid-level practitioner license to answer the current oral health crisis and increase the number of patients receiving dental care (see attachment 11).

Dena Duncan, Idaho citizen, testified in support of **S 1205**. She suggested that Idaho should help those in the health care gap to improve their health because improved health would translate into improved families and improved communities.

Valerie Bish, foster parent and guardian ad litem, testified in support of foster care reform in Idaho. She suggested that all foster care stakeholders should be involved in the reform process, including the foster parents, health and welfare administrators and court workers.

Ardella Percy, representing the Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline, testified in support of funding for the Suicide Prevention Plan and mental health treatment. She related a story about a hotline call she received from a young man in rural Idaho.

Frank Gallant, former school district superintendent and professor, testified in support of **S 1204** and **S 1205**. He discussed the economic benefits of Medicaid expansion. He said that the State would see an increase in sales revenue, compensation, new jobs and tax revenue.

Brian Pope, chief executive officer of the Northwest Children's Home, testified regarding three issues his residential treatment center for youth has with the Department of Health and Welfare: (i) referrals from the State have been dramatically reduced, (ii) individual education plan process is not being completed for children placed in his facility, and (iii) lower rates paid to the Northwest Children's Home (see attachment 12).

Lori Lodge, licensed professional counselor, testified in support of reform for mental health treatment in Idaho. She discussed her experiences and concerns for mental health treatment for children. She stated that **S 1204** and **S 1205** could make a big impact on children's mental health across the State.

Kathleen Keyes, foster parent, testified in support of foster care reform in Idaho (see attachment 13). She told her personal experience as a foster parent. She related her concerns with the frequent relocation of foster children and placement away from siblings.

Sylvia Chariton, representing the Idaho Chapter of the American Association of University Women, testified in support of **S 1204** and **S 1205**. Women make up 55 percent of the health care gap population and face a greater risk of insurance loss if they become widowed or divorced. Women who fall in the health care gap live lives of quiet desperation.

Representative Perry requested the written testimony of Brian (last name withheld) be entered into the record (see attachment 14).

Chairman Heider requested that the testimony of **Teri Murrison** be entered into the record (see attachment 15).

**WRITTEN
TESTIMONY:**

The following individuals and groups testified regarding Medicaid expansion (see attachment 16):

1. Erin Bennett, representing the American Heart Association / American Stroke Association in Idaho;
2. Fred Birnbaum, representing the Idaho Freedom Foundation;
3. Karleen Davis;
4. William Fowkes;
5. Audrey Gatewood;
6. Idaho Voices for Children;
7. Barbara Kemp;
8. Cay and Ron Marquart;
9. Mike McGrane, representing the Idaho Nurses Association and the Nurse Leaders of Idaho;
10. Danielle Ryals;
11. Susan Sered; and
12. Clella Steinke.

The following individuals and groups testified regarding foster care reform (see attachment 17):

1. Michelle Alden, representing Healthy Foundations;
2. Stephanie Alvarez;
3. Brian McCauley;
4. Valerie McCauley;
5. Carly Neff;
6. Lisa Nordstrom;
7. JoAnn Parkinson;
8. Jamie Taylor; and
9. Compilation of Stories, Comments and Messages (Pages i-vi and 1-86).

The following individuals testified regarding Mental Health, Behavioral Health and Optum (see attachment 18):

1. Jessica Chilcott;
2. Jamie Gibson;
3. Vanessa Johnson;
4. Matthew Montoya; and
5. Jennifer Zielinski.

The following individual testified regarding medical neglect (see attachment 19):

1. Mariah Walton.

The following individual testified regarding marijuana (see attachment 20):

1. Dr. Leanne Rousseau

**CLOSING
REMARKS:**

Chairman Wood commented that Idaho citizens are suffering in various areas. In particular, he expressed his concern regarding foster care reform. **Chairman Wood** thanked everyone in the audience for being in attendance and being willing to testify today. He indicated that the Committees will do their best to address the issues presented here today.

Chairman Heider stated that the Committees are trying their best to represent the citizens of Idaho. He thanked all those in attendance today.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business, **Chairman Heider** adjourned the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

Senator Heider
Chair

Karen R. Westbrook
Secretary