

MINUTES
HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 20, 2023

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW20

MEMBERS: Chairman Vander Woude, Vice Chairman Erickson, Representatives Blanksma, Kingsley, Mitchell, Dixon(24), Gallagher, Healey, Redman, Wheeler, Chew, Rubel, Roberts

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

H 64: **Chairman Vander Woude** called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He introduced **Caitlin Yang**, the committee page for the second half of the session.

Rep. Julianne Young, District 30, presented **H 64** to add "in-person" to the allowed types of care facility visitations. Stipulation is also made to assure the standards for visitors and staff are the same. This bill is silent on vaccine requirements.

Mary Kay Alix, self, testified in **opposition** to **H 64**, stating in-person visitations should be a basic matter of routine. This legislation codifies what never should have happened during the pandemic.

Sydney Alix, self, testified in **opposition** to **H 64**. The precautionary measures limit visitors and, as many experienced during the pandemic, cause harm to the elderly.

Linda Hines, Owner, Grace Assisted Living and Memory Care, testified in **support** of **H 64**. She explained the screening for staff or family members at her facilities only consists of taking the person's temperature and asking questions regarding their current health. It has never included vaccination questions or proof. Answering questions, she said the Public Health Districts gave differing instructions during the Pandemic without input from stakeholders.

In closing remarks, **Rep. Young** emphasized this legislation was instituted on behalf of the facility owners who asked for help during the pandemic. In-person visitation is the most important part of this bill. A care facility is going to make reasonable requirements to maintain their staff, which will naturally flow to visitors.

MOTION: **Rep. Healey** made a motion to send **H 64** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Rep. Gallagher** made a substitute motion to send **H 64** to General Orders to remove Section 20. **Motion failed by a voice vote.**

VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION: **Chairman Vander Woude** called for a vote on the motion to send **H 64** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Gallagher** requested she be recorded as voting **NAY**. **Rep. Young** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Jackie Smith, President, Idaho Association of Home Care Agencies (IAHCA) presented information regarding the association. She described their support services for persons wishing to age in place. Members are paid through Medicaid, the Veterans Administration, or privately. The current 70% to 80% rate of Medicaid clients to all participants is increasing.

Administrative costs are increasing due to requirements for training, oversight, documentation, overtime, health insurance costs, and the electronic visit verification mandate. Cost cutting measures have included minimizing staff, limiting caregiver hours, and shifting costs to their applicants.

Keeping participants in their homes saves money by helping them remain stable outside of the expensive long-term care facilities, emergency rooms, and hospitals.

Branden Beier, Vice President, IAHC, explained the nationwide caregiver shortage causes include an increased aging population, low Medicaid reimbursement, and increased wage competition from outside of the industry. The emergency waiver allowing spouses and parents to care for loved ones will cause further shortages when it ends in May, 2023. With only a \$2.54 increase from 2009 to 2020, they are requesting a rate increase effective July 1, 2023.

Answering a committee question, **Robert Vande Merwe**, representing the IAHC, stated the cost of care facilities is \$9k per month. **Mr. Beier** further answered the question by stating home care, which fluctuates from eight to fifteen hours per week, costs \$2k to \$3k per month.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:49 a.m.

Representative Vander Woude
Chair

Irene Moore
Secretary