

MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Monday, February 20, 2023
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW54
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman VanOrden, Vice Chairman Zuiderveld, Senators Lee, Bjerke, Wintrow, and Taylor
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Harris
- 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 VanOrden** called the meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) to order at 3:09 p.m.
- INTRODUCTION:** **New Page Evelyn Kircher** introduced herself as the page for the second half of the Legislative Session. **Ms. Kircher** stated she was from Boise, Idaho, and had always been interested in government process. She was in the Capital Capstone Student Legislator four times where she learned so much that it gave her the opportunity to come serve in the Senate.
- S 1094** **HEALTH - Amends existing law to provide for temporary registration of experienced international medical graduates who are in the United States as asylees, humanitarian parolees, or refugees and to require that registrants agree to practice in a health professional shortage area.** **Senator Wintrow** informed their Committee this bill created pathways for individuals who had been licensed physicians in their country outside the United States, and were forcibly displaced due to war, political asylum, or other issues. **Dr. Scott Smith** introduced himself as a retired residency director and leadership for internal medicine residency at the Veterans Administration (VA). He informed the committee that 97 percent of Idaho's geography was now federally designated as underserved by physicians. **Dr. Scott** stated he was at a State Department Relocation Center, which had many refugees, asylees and humanitarian parolees in that area, which brought a great need for culturally appropriate health care.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Taylor** inquired if that would take away internship seats from Idaho residents. **Dr. Smith** stated no, they would be added to existing internships. **Senator Bjerke** inquired where the grant funding would come from. **Dr. Smith** replied they were currently searching for grantors. **Vice Chairman Zuiderveld** inquired as to how many would take advantage of the program. **Dr. Smith** replied there were around 15 at this time. He stated Idaho was the first state in the country to implement this kind of program, which was why they expected many enrollees in the future.
- TESTIMONY:** **Georgette Siqueiros**, Community Engagement Manager, International Rescue Committee (IRC), testified in person in support of **S 1094**. She informed the Committee of the health care shortage, in that there were over 9 thousand open positions. This bill would provide career paths for refugees that could help address the shortage. **Nicholas Nelson** registered in support of **S 1094**.

MOTION: **Senator Bjerke** moved to send **S 1094** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Taylor** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION: **Idaho Association of Home Care Agencies. Pete Amador**, owner of Better Home Healthcare and member of the Idaho Association of Home Care Agencies, informed the Committee that he provided all services found in an assisted living facility for individuals in the comfort of their own homes. Homemaker services included daily living activities, meal preparation, and cleaning. Those services were paid for privately, or through the Veteran's Administration (VA) or Idaho Medicaid (see Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION: **Senator Wintrow** asked what happens with an elderly person when they leave the hospital and need in-home care after their life savings were exhausted. **Mr. Amador** replied home care agencies are not able to service that person. **Senator Wintrow** asked when the last time was they had an increase in rate. **Mr. Amador** answered there was one in 2023, as there had not been substantial increase since 2013. **Senator Wintrow** asked if a budget request was made to the Governor's Office. **Mr. Amador** stated yes, he had spoke with that office often.

Chairman VanOrden asked what blended rate was on the chart. **Mr. Amador** replied as a home care agency, all the rates and the costs for care were added together for budgetary purposes, based off of the Medicaid reimbursement rate.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman VanOrden** adjourned the meeting at 3:57 p.m.

Senator VanOrden
Chair

Michelle Tierney
Secretary