

MINUTES
HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 23, 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.

Chairman Vander Woude called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

RS 30438: **Rep. Megan Blanksma**, District 8, presented **RS 30438**, replacing **H 122**, to increase the Medicaid federal poverty level from 185% to 205% for pregnant women.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Erickson** made a motion to introduce **RS 30438**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 30437: **Rep. Jordan Redman**, District 3, presented **RS 30437** to transition Medicaid to a managed care program.

MOTION: **Rep. Dixon (24)** made a motion to introduce **RS 30437**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 162: **Rep. Jordan Redman**, District 3, presented **H 162** for virtual health care. The Telehealth Care Access Act is renamed and updates are made to capture best practice while insuring patient safety.

MOTION: **Rep. Roberts** made a motion to send **H 162** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Nancy Powell, Executive Director, Independent Doctors of Idaho, testified in support of **H 162**. Forty-three percent of their members consider telehealth a large priority and saw an increase in use during the pandemic. Virtual health care has been successful, is especially useful in addressing long wait times, and provides better care in rural areas.

VOTE ON MOTION: **Chairman Vander Woude** called for a vote on the motion to send **H 162** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Redman** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Mike Sandvig, President Emeritus, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), presented information regarding its origin, mission, local affiliates, and statewide support groups. He stated mental illness is a medical condition which can occur before fourteen years of age. The average delay between the onset of symptoms and treatment is eleven years. With identification and treatment there is a hope for recovery.

With affordable mental health (MH) coverage a vital component, he requested a Medicaid expansion replacement be approved before any repeal of the current program.

Beth Markley, Executive Director, NAMI, answering a question explained the Rosebud youth program, a peer support group in schools to help reduce isolationism, debunk the MH stigma, and provide a safe place where students can discuss a variety of topics.

Lee Flinn, Director, Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline, shared the history of the suicide hotline, the new 988 hotline, and the 208 hotline. There is also a non-public dedicated law enforcement line. They partner with the Department of Correction and several county jails to provide non-cost calls. She described the crisis responder focus and the use of crisis mobile units.

Stewart Wilder, Co-chairman, Idaho Suicide Prevention Action Collective (ISPAC), updated the committee on the collective's history, oversight of the 5-year suicide prevention plan, and the status of the next plan for 2024 to 2029.

Teresa Abbott, Suicide Prevention Manager, Department of Health and Welfare, was invited to answer committee questions. In the schools they provide both the Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) and Sources of Strength training programs. Returning veterans face issues with isolation, post-traumatic stress, and an aversion to reaching out for help.

Lee Flinn responded to additional questions. She said they now have employees, not volunteers, answering the hotlines. The calls are routed through a national line. Between the greeting and option tree it takes at least a minute for a caller to be connected. This is a continued issue and discussion point for all of the states. A missing piece for higher risk support is the ability to refer callers under eighteen years of age to juvenile crisis centers. Work continues on expanding their memorandums of understanding (MOU) to all of the jails and including staff.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Representative Vander Woude
Chair

Irene Moore
Secretary