

MINUTES
HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, March 15, 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:** Representative(s) Blanksma, Kingsley

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.

MOTION: **Rep. Dixon (24)** made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 2, 8, 9, and 10, 2023, meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Marilyn Sword, Coordinator, Idaho Caregiver Alliance (ICA), presented an informational update on the ICA. Established through grants in 2013, ICA provides a voice for family caregivers while connecting them to sources for information and support. She shared examples of the decisions caregivers are facing, the financial assistance received during the pandemic, issues faced with employing outside help, and concerns as the pandemic assistance comes to an end.

ICA convenes stakeholders to review services and programs, such as the Boise State University family caregiver navigator, which has helped 378 family caregivers. ICA continues to reach out to ethnic communities to understand and assist with their family caregiver needs. The goal is to assure healthy, independent families while using resources wisely and efficiently. Enormous savings occur when individuals are not placed in facilities and do not frequent emergency rooms.

The ICA funding comes from the Commission on Aging, Administration on Community Living, as well as other partnerships. The primary grant funding ends in September and they are looking for other support partners.

Answering questions, **Ms. Sword** said spouses are considered legally responsible partners which impedes their ability to be paid caregivers. Changing this exemption would require both Medicaid and legislative action.

They would like to work with employers to develop caring environments for all family caregivers. There is an increasing wave of caregiving needs for the aging baby boomer population. Additionally, better medical outcomes are providing special needs children the ability to live longer and with their families.

Other state coalitions are administered by either the Medicaid agency, aging agency, or other agency determined by that state's governor. Very few of the coalitions have existed beyond the grants.

Chairman Vander Woude commented the Director of the Department of Health and Welfare expects an extension for the pandemic assistance to carry it beyond the May, 2023, expiration date. He is also submitting a waiver to continue spousal care assistance. Continuing the parental child care assistance is more difficult and the Director was unsure if a waiver or change in the Medicaid State Plan is required for approval. The pandemic changes highlighted the benefit of spousal and child caregivers. Changing the Medicaid State Plan or applying for the waivers will not require the legislature.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:27 a.m.

Representative Vander Woude
Chair

Irene Moore
Secretary