

MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 18, 2025

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW54

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair VanOrden, Vice Chairman Bjerke, Senators Harris, Zuiderveld, Lenney, Shippy, Blaylock, Keyser, and Wintrow

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

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: **Chair VanOrden** called the meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) to order at 3:01 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Shippy** moved to approve the Minutes of February 5, 2025. **Senator Harris** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

H 31 **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE - Amends existing law to provide that a third party that requires prior authorization for items or services provided to a recipient of medical assistance shall accept authorization from the state.** **Jared Larsen**, Legislative and Regulator Affairs Chief, Department of Health and Welfare (Department), stated this bill guaranteed Medicaid as the payer of last resort, particularly in instances when an individual had both Medicaid and private insurance. In those cases, private insurance must pay first after Medicaid authorized a procedure.

MOTION: **Senator Blaylock** moved to send **H 31** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Harris** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

S 1052 **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELFARE - Amends existing law to establish provisions regarding bureau chiefs.** **Senator Lenney** explained this bill required Department bureau chiefs to be approved by the Board of Health and Welfare (Board). He noted the Department employed 30 bureau chiefs and this ensured accountability.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Wintrow** inquired if bureau chiefs could begin working before approval from the Board. **Adam Jones**, Assistant to the Director of Health and Welfare, responded the Board met quarterly and that bureau chiefs could be hired and begin working prior to the Board's concurrence.

MOTION: **Senator Blaylock** moved to send **S 1052** to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Wintrow** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

AGENCY UPDATE: **Judy Bicknell Taylor**, Director of the Idaho Commission on Aging (ICOM), shared insights from a needs assessment conducted to understand the quality of life for older Idahoans (Attachment 1). The survey, covering both urban and rural areas, highlighted that while many seniors report a good quality of life, a significant portion—especially caregivers—faced challenges in healthcare, technology access, and social engagement. The findings guided the State's 2024-2028 plan, focusing on case management, nutrition, technology use, and reducing social isolation to better support Idaho's aging population.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Shippy** noted that on the campaign trail, constituents expressed concern about behind-schedule payments. **Ms. Taylor** noted she was not aware of a payment lag. **Vicki Yansik**, Project Manager, mentioned a few local areas experienced delays, especially during the launch of Luma. Those delays had all been resolved. **Senator Shippy** asked what percentage of funds went directly towards meal programs as opposed to overhead costs. **Ms. Yansik** explained the Federal Older Americans Act placed a 10% cap on administrative costs. By her estimate, a least 50% of the costs went directly to contracted services.

Senator Wintrow asked Ms. Taylor to address the needs of the Alzheimer's and dementia population. **Ms. Taylor** pointed to ICOM's work assisting the caregivers of individuals with cognitive disorders and discussed the important prevention work happening within the Department of Health and Welfare. ICOM and the Department partnered closely to address Idaho's aging population through planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and services.

Vice Chair Bjerke shared his appreciation for the work of Ms. Taylor and ICOM generally.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Vice Chair Bjerke** adjourned the meeting at 3:47 p.m.

Senator VanOrden
Chair

Rebecca Kozlowski
Secretary