

MINUTES
HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 09, 2026

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW20

MEMBERS: Chairman Vander Woude, Vice Chairman Erickson, Representatives Healey, Redman, Wheeler, Beiswenger, Burgoyne, Cayler, Fuhriman, Leavitt, McCann, Thompson, Hall (Stone), Tanner(13), Rubel, Egbert

**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.

MOTION: **Rep. Egbert** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2026, meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 33180: **Rep. Josh Wheeler**, District 35, presented **RS 33180** to establish the Idaho Prior Authorization Act for improved transparency, consistency, and timeliness by health insurers and utilization-review organizations.

MOTION: **Rep. Redman** made a motion to introduce **RS 33180**.

Concern was expressed regarding the non-inclusion of peer-to-peer reviews.

**VOTE ON
MOTION:** **Chairman Vander Woude** called for a vote on the motion to introduce **RS 33180**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

During the remainder of the meeting the committee discussed their findings, suggestions, and concerns regarding the Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) suggested budget cuts.

Their short-term suggestions to meet the immediate budget cuts included use of the Reserve Fund, repeal of Medicaid Expansion, rate reductions for hospitals in strong financial positions, a Residential Habilitation Provider rate decrease of 1%, increase of the Medicaid Expansion work history requirement from 30 to 90 days, a decrease of the 500 DHW Medicaid re-evaluation employees, re-negotiating contracts to delay or decrease payments, decrease of the Extended Foster Care Program age limit, and alignment of the DHW employee benefits with industry standards.

The committee also made long-term recommendations which included streamlining the DHW's program efficiency, re-evaluating the Residential Habilitation Agencies' tiers and pricing utilization, auditing all of the DHW programs, developing contract stipulations regarding price increases and accountability, providing the DHW with evidence-based tools to assure the right level of care is being delivered, and reviewing hospital medication charges.

The committee noted the provider 4% increase was instigated by the Governor, not the Legislature. Additionally, any use of the Millennium Fund for the budget deficit goes beyond the set up and intent of the fund. The current reserve balance is considerably beyond the reserve cap stated in statute and could easily cover the deficit.

Concerns expressed by the committee were the lack of data needed to determine the impact of any budget cuts, assuring minimal disruption for Idahoans and counties when cuts are made, and maintaining the population's needs, which do not go away.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Representative Vander Woude
Chair

Irene Moore
Secretary