

MINUTES
HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 26, 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:** Representative(s) McCann

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 33403: **Rep. Jeff Ehlers**, District 21, presented **RS 33403** to move the podiatry medical practice rules into statute.

MOTION: **Rep. Redman** made a motion to introduce **RS 33403**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 713: **Rep. David Cannon**, District 30, presented **H 713** to eliminate the health care insurance industry's co-pay accumulator policy which does not apply a third party's monetary assistance to a patient's co-pay.

Rep. Fuhriman declared Rule 80, stating a possible conflict of interest.

Rep. Ben Fuhriman, District 30, continued the presentation of **H 713**. He explained how the various insurance exchange plans and their high deductibles impact families. Although this policy change may increase rates, he estimated it would be minimal. All insurance plans, except self-funded plans, use accumulators.

Rep. Redman declared Rule 80, stating a possible conflict of interest.

Testifying **in support** of **H 713** were **Tiffany Mecham**, Self; **Lisal Drollinger**, Self; **Trevor Drollinger**, Self.

They explained the impact of expensive medications on individuals and families. This legislation allows recognition and better use of funds from families or financial assistance programs they would not pursue otherwise. Patients faced with expensive medications make decisions at difficult times, often leading to more expensive consequences. Some families have intentionally lowered their income in order to obtain Medicaid coverage. This legislation with no budgetary impact has a great impact on Idaho families.

Steve Thomas, Association of Idaho Health Plans, testified **in opposition** to **H 713** because it might increase plan deductibles and the maximum out-of-pocket expense limits. It may also be in conflict with the existing kick-back statute.

In closing remarks **Rep. Fuhriman** stated the families who chose to not manipulate the Medicaid system need this help and reward. **Rep. Cannon** shared a personal story of a family member's injury, billing frustrations, and the decision to pay a bill rather than pursue its insurance payment.

MOTION: **Rep. Wheeler** made a motion to send **H 713** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Committee discussion included concern regarding further government involvement, resultant hidden or unexpected costs, the need for immediate assistance for this burden, and the impact on small businesses.

**ROLL CALL
VOTE:**

Rep. Cayler requested a roll call vote. **Motion failed by a vote of 7 AYE, 8 NAY, and 1 Absent/Excused. Voting in favor of the motion: Reps. Vander Woude, Erickson, Wheeler, Fuhriman, Stone, Rubel, Egbert. Voting in opposition to the motion: Reps. Healey, Redman, Beiswenger, Burgoyne, Cayler, Leavitt, Thompson, Tanner(13). Rep. McCann** was absent/excused. **H 713** will be held in committee.

H 655:

Rep. Josh Wheeler, District 35, presented **H 655** for a twelve-month Medicaid exemption preceptor pilot program to allow more time for physicians to spend training medical students. The program applies to only three specialties, caps each specialty at 100 providers, and the outcomes will be evaluated.

MOTION:

Rep. Rubel made a motion to **HOLD H 655** in committee. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 33527:

Rep. Josh Wheeler, District 35, presented **RS 33527** which replaces **H 655**. The legislation updates **H 655** to include advanced practice providers and physician assistants, with the same specialty provider cap. He requested it be introduced and sent directly to the Second Reading Calendar.

MOTION:

Rep. Redman made a motion to introduce **RS 33527** and recommend it be sent directly to the Second Reading Calendar.

Answering questions, **Rep. Wheeler** said the pilot program removes the lengthy administrative requirements, leaving physicians time to train medical students or see patients.

**VOTE ON
MOTION:**

Chairman Vander Woude called for a vote on the motion to introduce **RS 33527** and recommend it be sent directly to the Second Reading Calendar. **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Burgoyne** requested to be recorded as voting **NAY. Rep. Wheeler** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 723:

Rep. Marco Erickson, District 33, presented **H 723** to improve quality of care for youth in facilities. Along with the four new sections, annual unannounced inspections of each facility will be conducted, including interviews with residents and staff. This provides transparency for youth and parents. Including an ombudsman would be an additional cost which can be considered at a later date.

MOTION:

Rep. Redman made a motion to send **H 723** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Responding to questions, **Rep. Erickson** said the included youth bill of rights empowers the residents to contact child protection if there is a violation. Although these youth rights already exist but are not shared with the youth or parents.

Brittany Shipley, Self, testified **in support** of **H 723**, stating the residents in the facilities require extensive support and high levels of care. This legislation safeguards families and youth. The current children's ombudsmen does not cover youth in facilities.

Jessica Hayes, Self, testified **in support** of **H 723**, sharing her experience in a facility, the various negative and abusive treatment she experienced, including the lack of academic classes and outside world contact. The family was impacted not only by her trauma, but also her parents' realization the facility was misleading them and she was not kept safe. She asked the committee to make Idaho a safe state where rights are real and children are safe, protected, and receive effective treatment. No child should need treatment because of the treatment they received.

**VOTE ON
MOTION:**

Chairman Vander Woude called for a vote on the motion to send **H 723** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Erickson** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

Representative Vander Woude
Chair

Irene Moore
Secretary