

MINUTES
HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 22, 2024

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 (Egbert), Rubel, Roberts

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative Mitchell

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. Roberts** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 13, 15, and 20, 2024, meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 542: **Rep. Josh Wheeler**, District 35, presented **H 542**. This legislation addresses the physician shortage by creating a pathway to licensure for internationally trained physicians. Applicants must meet the criteria for provisional licensure, pass the stipulated exams, attend recognized foreign medical schools, and receive board approval. A three-year provisional license is established allowing practice with a supervising physician. After the three-year period, a licensure application can be submitted. There are international physicians already in Idaho wanting to work.

MOTION: **Rep. Healey** made a motion to send **H 542** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Jonathan Wolfson, Chief Legal Officer, Cicero Institute, testified **in support of H 542**. This helps individuals, often the best doctors in the world who have been practicing for many years, come to Idaho. It also allows trained individuals who are already living in Idaho to be able to practice medicine.

VOTE ON MOTION: **Chairman Vander Woude** called for a vote on the motion to send **H 542** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Wheeler** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

Alex Williamson, Budget and Policy Analyst, Legislative Services, provided information on the Medicaid budget history and requests for the current and upcoming year.

The Medicaid budget consists of five programs. One is for administration and management. The remaining four cover Medicaid's coordinated, enhanced, basic, and expansion plans.

The Division of Medicaid is authorized 213 full time personnel (FTP) within the administration and management costs. They reported five vacant positions as of February 1, 2024.

Estimated expenditures include the \$4.68B already appropriated by the legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2024. She noted the recent year increases were results of the pandemic and public health emergencies which froze enrollees on the expanded plan and caused increased costs for services. Mid FY 2024 adjustments include a total funds rescission of approximately \$277M, which will, upon approval, decrease FY 2024 to roughly \$4.3B. There is a visible cost flattening as Idaho leaves the pandemic.

Of the FY 2023 total 448,004 plan participants, 43% (189,948) are in the basic child plan, 32% (142,062) are in the expansion plan, 8% (36,818) are in the basic adult plan, 7% (32,883) are in the coordinated plan, 6% (27,539) are in the enhanced child plan, and 4% (18,754) are in the enhanced adult plan.

Responding to questions, **Ms. Williamson** explained a drop in the expansion population resulted from the redeterminations, indicated in the FY 2024 numbers, and is reflected in the agency's budget request. The redetermination began at the end of FY 2023.

Ms. Williamson noted several items within the 2025 Governor's Budget Recommendations, which are onetime mid-year adjustment supplementals for FY 2024. Budget requests are submitted in September of the prior year and based on forecasts. With actual data, the agency determined there would be excess funds which are reflected in the onetime supplemental amount. The Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) is in procurement year two. The cost of the system has a 90/10 federal split. In 2023 the legislature put aside the 10% state portion into a dedicated fund. This request for \$132,378,000 includes both the 10% state and the 90% federal funding.

Ms. Williamson explained, upon questioning, the current vendor annual increase covers the current system until the new system is on line. The work requirement waiver consultant line item is a specialist agency at a 50/50 funding split.

The ongoing enhancement nondiscretionary adjustments are a result of the changing Idaho federal medical assistance percentages (FMAP) rate because Idaho is doing better than other states. There is an FMAP floor rate which will assure Idaho never bears the full Medicaid program cost. The maintenance budget did not include any nondiscretionary adjustments, which only impact 2025 appropriations. The onetime supplemental rescission impacts 2024, so they will not affect the same fiscal year.

The hospital assessment fund reflects a technical correction to move funds appropriated to the wrong dedicated fund. It has a net zero impact.

RS 31431: **Rep. Megan Blanksma**, District 8, presented **RS 31431** for Naturopathic Physician licensing.

MOTION: **Rep. Wheeler** made a motion to introduce **RS 31431**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 31444: **Rep. Megan Blanksma**, District 8, presented **RS 31444**, proposed legislation to extend Medicaid postpartum care coverage for women to twelve months.

MOTION: **Rep. Wheeler** made a motion to introduce **RS 31444**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee the meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

Representative Vander Woude
Chair

Irene Moore
Secretary