

MINUTES  
**HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 15, 2017

**TIME:** 9:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** Room EW20

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Wood, Vice Chairman Packer, Representatives Hixon, Perry, Vander Woude, Redman, Gibbs, Blanksma, Hanks, Kingsley, Zollinger, Chew (Reifers), Rubel

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Zollinger

**GUESTS:** Rebecca Sprague and Kira Burgess, DHW/SPP; Dina Flores-Brewer, Disability Rights Idaho; Kelli D. Brassfield, IAC; Brent King and Alana Minton, Dep AG - DHW; John Buck, Coroner's Assoc.; Kim Kane, Russ Baron, Cameron Gilliland, Jamie Newbry, Blake Brumfield, and Gary Moore, DHW; Gabe Rudow, Jannus; Shannon Decker, The Speedy Foundation; Jeni Griffin, SPAN Idaho; Carmen Stanger, AFSP; Debbie Wilder, Live Wilder

**Chairman Wood** called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Redman** made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 27, February 3, 8, and 9, 2017, meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**RS 25281:** **Cameron Gilliland**, Deputy Administrator, Division of Family and Community Services, presented **RS 25281**, a revision to **H 44**. The Proposed Legislation gives the Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) the ability to establish, operate, and maintain a developmental disabilities (DD) treatment facility. This will improve the South West Idaho Treatment Center (SWITC) safety by allowing consideration of a secure four-bed facility on the SWITC campus. Dangerous clients are referred by court order to SWITC for treatment and competency evaluation.

Because they are licensed as an intermediate care facility, all clients are allowed to move freely within the facility. This includes the dangerous clients and has resulted in attacks on the staff and other clients. The attacks have led to increased workers compensation claims, permanent disability, property damage, and assaulted community members by run away clients. Immediate secure features are needed to protect the staff, other clients, and the public.

Changes from the originally approved legislation added language to allow attorney and state advocacy group visits. Ninety-day reviews were added for continued need determinations.

Secure features will be added this year to address the immediate need. They will also pursue determination of the costs and benefits of either a new building or remodeling an existing facility in coordination with the Governor's office and the Legislature.

Answering questions, **Mr. Gilliland** said immediate security will utilize what they have at the center, such as locks, cameras, and alarms. Any purchases will be from existing funds. There is currently one dangerous client, which would require modifying only one room. The court order referrals already occur.

The staff ratio of two to one during waking hours is necessary to prevent injury or persons leaving the campus. Staff members physically block clients wishing to do harm or leave. With security measures in place, the staff utilization would be less and safer. Oversight remains with the court, although the DHW Director has the final admittance or discharge authority.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Gibbs** made a motion to introduce **RS 25281. Motion carried by voice vote.**

**Nate Fisher**, Idaho Suicide Prevention Coalition (ISPC), presented information for the committee. The coalition, organized in 2015 at a 501(c)(3)H non-profit organization, combines a large variety of groups to address Idaho's high suicide rate. The ISPC has secured additional funding for the Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline's infrastructure and texting program.

**Steward Wilder**, President, ISPC and the Wilder Foundation, explained the Coalition saw the need for more immediate coroner reporting beyond the current five-day protocol. A more immediate reporting protocol of forty-eight hours for suicides would help the school system and community better handle the compounded and profound impact of a student's suicide. The Coalition identifies areas that may have weaknesses and provides a collaborative stakeholder approach to make the changes. Subsequent stakeholder meetings have led to a voluntary participation in a forty-eight hour initiative. Coroners now send an event notification, indicating only the school name, to the State Department of Education. The schools can then use evidence-based postvention practices to deal with the loss and prevent contagion.

**Jack Verin**, Retired Judge, discussed the ways the social science and the law intersect and conflict. Collaboration, although necessary, becomes difficult when different goals, agendas, and perspectives interfere with effective communication. There is an uneasy alliance between the law and social welfare or behavioral health.

Differences include terminology, environment, professional perceptions, public perceptions, philosophical viewpoints, ethical perspectives, types of relationships, personal rights, resolution methods, and opinions. Even with these differences, we can work together to prevent, intervene, and discuss the issues surrounding suicide.

Answering questions, **Judge Verin**, said the drug and other specialty courts are working very well to make a difference.

**Steward Wilder**, President, ISPC and the Wilder Foundation, presented information on the safe storage of medicine and firearms public service announcements being used to raise awareness. They are reaching out to partner with shooting range owners, firearm instructors, hunting organizations, healthcare organizations, and the pharmaceutical community.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

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Representative Wood  
Chair

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Irene Moore  
Secretary