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Brad Little
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James Steed
 Chair

Christine Pisani
 Executive Director

March 21, 2019

Chairman Fred Martin
 Senate Health & Welfare
 Statehouse
 Boise, ID 83720

Dear Chairman Martin and Members of the Committee:

The Council on Developmental Disabilities is authorized by federal and state law to monitor service systems and policies and to advocate for improved services that enable Idahoans with developmental disabilities to live meaningful lives, included in their home communities.

The Council supports Senate Bill 1204 for four main reasons:

- 1) The Council applauds this thoughtfully crafted proposed legislation. SB1204 provides a positive approach to assisting Idaho residents to find and keep a job with career coaching, job training, and education opportunities. The approach outlined in this bill provides a real solution to helping people who can and want to work by assisting people to overcome their individual employment barriers. Keeping people healthy, keeps people working.
- 2) This proposed legislation does not punish people by taking their health care coverage away for inability to work. There are approximately 25,000 Idahoans who experience a severe and persistent mental illness who would likely lose their coverage should a work requirement be imposed. This proposed legislation affords Idahoans who experience a serious and persistent mental illness a real chance at access to comprehensive mental health treatment that is not found through private health insurance.
- 3) *4,570 direct care workers who currently do not have access to affordable health insurance. Of that total number, about 3,980, of all direct care workers in Idaho earn less than an annual income of 138% of the poverty level. By allowing individuals between 100-138% of federal poverty level access to the comprehensive coverage provided through Medicaid instead of forcing them to the private health insurance plans on the Healthcare exchange, they will avoid high annual deductibles, thus preventing a secondary coverage gap. Through this proposal this segment of our workforce will have a real chance at seeing their doctors without threat of financial bankruptcy.
- 4) The Council appreciates the implementation of section 5. This section demonstrates a vision toward continuous quality improvement and intentional efforts to measure health outcomes for beneficiaries.

This legislation presents actual solutions that demonstrates a real sense of being in touch with the lives of Idahoans who are currently in the coverage gap.

Thank you for considering the Council's comments.

Sincerely,


 Christine Pisani, Executive Director