MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE:	Wednesday, February 26, 2020
TIME:	3:00 P.M.
PLACE:	Room WW54
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Chairman Martin, Vice Chair Souza, Senators Heider, Lee, Harris, Burtenshaw, Bayer, Jordan, and Nelson
ABSENT/ EXCUSED:	None
NOTE:	The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.
CONVENED:	**Chairman Martin** called the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) to order at 3:00 p.m.
HJM 013	**Joint Memorial seeking to remove barriers by the federal government relating to Suboxone (generic, buprenorphine). Representative Ellis**, District 15, presented House Joint Memorial 013 which seeks to remove barriers put in place at the federal level relating to Suboxone. He explained it is used to treat opioid addiction.
TESTIMONY:	**Pamela Meyer**, constituent from District 15, explained that she has a family member who suffers from opioid addiction. She said that the stigma of opioid disease keeps desperately ill idahoans sick and dying. She said her relative who struggles with addiction benefited from Suboxone. She explained that Suboxone is a four to one formulation of buprenorphine with a medication named Narcan that prevents users from getting high. She confronted the concept of addiction diversion, the idea that this is substituting one addiction for another. She said that this legislation will provide more access to medical treatment, and will curb self medication with other drugs of abuse.
	In response to questions from Senator Lee, Vice Chair Souza, and Senator Bayer, **Ms. Meyer** said that her relative chose to quit Suboxone after ten days, against medical advice; and there are pros and cons to short and long term use. She said the chances of relapse are substantially lower when taken for prolonged periods and the chances of death are substantially lower. If Suboxone is taken over the course of a few weeks, experiencing withdrawal is eminent. The medication may be titrated down to muffle withdrawal effects. She said Suboxone was successful with her relative after a ten day period and they had quit Suboxone early to avoid a dependent state.
	Senator Lee clarified that the treatment varies on an individual basis and that there is benefit when working with a medical provider.
	Ms. Meyer detailed the difficulties of choosing a facility, and that Suboxone may be taken at home.
	Representative Ellis explained medication assisted treatment (MAT), a cooperation between a client's physician and psychiatrist to produce a recovery plan. The University of Idaho has a program called Echo Idaho, which provides MAT training throughout the state. He said their goal is to make the medications to treat opioid addiction as available as the opioids. Because of waiver requirements, only 5 percent of Idaho doctors have the ability to prescribe Suboxone.

TESTIMONY:	**Nicki Chopski**, Director of the Idaho Board of Pharmacy, responded to a question from Vice Chair Souza. She explained that the cost varies for Suboxone, ranging from $75 to $300 per month and dependent on insurance and government funded treatment programs. She spoke on behalf of herself, stating that she believed all physicians should have the ability to prescribe Suboxone. She explained the side effects and use with pre-existing conditions.
	Representative Ellis said that the memorial was unanimously supported by the Governor's Opioid and Substance Use Disorder Advisory Group.
MOTION:	**Senator Jordan** moved to send **HJM 013** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Lee** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Heider will sponsor the bill.
MINUTES APPROVAL:	**Chairman Martin** asked for unanimous consent to approve the minutes at the end of the Committee meeting. There were no objections.
PRESENTATION:	**Dr. Sarah Toevs**, Director of the Center for the Study of Aging, Boise State University (BSU), said she was representing the Idaho Family Caregiver Alliance (IFCA). She said the majority of their funding comes from the federal Administration for Community Living. The Idaho Commission on Aging has actively supported their initiative. She explained that their services are not limited to families taking care of the elderly; they work with caregivers across life spans.
	She said everyday they can help keep someone in their home which saves resources and promotes better quality of life. She pointed out that they are fiscally responsible and they hope to prevent unnecessary costs to the state, and that an issue that most caregivers face is a lack of rest and personal time. They have established or supported seven new lifespan respite facilities around Idaho which include at-home care assistance.
	In response to Vice Chair Souza, **Ms. Toevs** expanded on their costs.
	Dr. Toevs said they have a strategic plan for 2024, they are here to act as a catalyst for change and to work on behalf of the unpaid family caregivers. She also described the Caregiver Navigator program they are piloting which aims to assist care providers. She asked that the Committee and State help by informing the IFCA on potential partners, when funding opportunities are available, and supporting legislation that helps caregivers throughout Idaho. In response to a question from Vice Chair Souza, **Ms. Toevs** said they do not have statistics on how many employers are caregiver friendly but through Department of Labor data, they realized there is potential to help businesses retain and support their current work force. She said BSU was engaged in supports that meet the caregiver need.
MINUTES APPROVAL:	**Senator Harris** moved to approve the Minutes of January 27, 2020. **Senator Heider** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
ADJOURNED:	There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Martin** adjourned the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

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Senator Martin
Chair

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Margo Miller
Secretary

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Bryce DeLay
Assistant to the Secretary