

MINUTES
HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 26, 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 (Hansen), Rubel, Roberts

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Dixon (24)

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 Erickson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Roberts** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 19 and 21, 2024, meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 578: **Rep. Megan Blanksma**, District 8, presented **H 578** to address religious discrimination for adoption and foster care. This is very prescriptive regarding what is religious discrimination and provides a claim limitation.

MOTION: **Rep. Healey** made a motion to send **H 578** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

David Ripley, Executive Director, Idaho Chooses Life, testified **in support of H 578**. This improvement of the Idaho foster care system makes the system easier, cheaper and less burdensome while assuring loving placement homes.

**VOTE ON
MOTION:** **Chairman Erickson** called for a vote on the motion to send **H 578** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Blanksma** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

RS 31517: **Rep. John Vander Woude**, District 22, presented **RS 31517**, a proposed resolution to ask the Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) to continue to seek waivers for the insurance exchange, cost sharing, and work requirements.

MOTION: **Rep. Blanksma** made a motion to introduce **RS 31517**.

Concern was expressed regarding the policing cost eclipsing any benefits.

**VOTE ON
MOTION:** **Chairman Erickson** called for a vote on the motion to introduce **RS 31517**. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Reps. Roberts, Hansen, and Rubel** requested they be recorded as voting **NAY**.

Vice Chairman Erickson turned the gavel over to **Chairman Vander Woude**.

HCR 27: **Rep. Chris Mathias**, District 19, presented **HCR 27**. This resolution assists the 2,000 Idaho families who have at least one child suffering from PANDA/PANS, with some needing intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG) treatment. Some insurance companies do not cover the treatment, burdening both those companies who do cover it and the families. The Department of Insurance (DOI) will work with insurance industry leaders to address the lack of this coverage. It also declares October 9, 2024, to be PANDA/PANS day. This legislative concurrent resolution approach has been used successfully to address previous needs of Idahoans.

MOTION: **Rep. Healey** made a motion to send **HCR 27** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Jenny Reese Davis, Self, testified **in support** of **HCR 27**. She explained the array of symptoms her daughter displayed at the beginning of her diagnosis. After her third IVIG treatment her sensory needs normalized, she once again attended school, and her illness was in remission. Since moving to Idaho with the subsequent insurance denial and exhausted appeals, her daughter is in the throes of the illness with worsening behavior as her brain is on fire from a faulty immune system. IVIG is the only key to get her back. The treatment cost without insurance is over \$8k a month. Families suffer when a child cannot receive treatment and they watch their child deteriorate.

Answering a committee question, **Ms. Reese Davis** said Blue Cross Blue Shield was the insurer and they denied the request stating it is still deemed as experimental treatment, even though it had previously proven successful.

Brian Festa, Self, testified **in support** of **HCR 27**. He described his son's severe symptoms and the need to obtain a different diagnosis in order to receive the IVIG treatment. The delays during the process resulted in an initially mild case escalating to severe at the time of IVIG treatment. Timely treatment without endless insurance battles or taking out second mortgages is very important to the families and the children. Many children end up in care facilities or take their lives. Self funded insurance plans, which are common employer sponsor plans, must also be included.

Rep. Rubel shared the state law cannot regulate self insured plans. However, in her experience, when state law requires something for non-self insured plans, the self insured plans generally fall in line.

Gina Nilsson, Self, testified **in support** of **HCR 27**, sharing her daughter's condition, which began at age thirteen. The IVIG treatment alleviated her daughter's suffering and she was able to eat again, attend college and is doing well. Please assure all children can get IVIG when it is medically necessary.

VOTE ON MOTION: **Chairman Vander Woude** called for a vote on the motion to send **HCR 27** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Mathias** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 526: Due to the sponsor not appearing before the committee, **H 526** will carry over to the meeting of Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:24 a.m.

Representative Vander Woude
Chair

Irene Moore
Secretary