

Director's Presentation of L&C to DOPL Legislation

Mr. Chair and members of the Committee, my name is Dave Jeppesen. I am the Director of the Department of Health and Welfare, and I am here today to present Senate Bill 1326

The Division of Licensing and Certification (L&C) in the Department of Health and Welfare is a regulatory body that licenses and inspects 18 types of healthcare facilities and agency types within Idaho. They also manage the certification program for certified family homes as well as Idaho's certified nurse aid registry.

The Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses (DOPL) provides consumer protection and public safety through its regulation of more than 204,000 licensees within more than 48 Boards and Commissions in Idaho.

DOPL is in the process of consolidating over 48 boards and commissions under one umbrella in order to improve customer service and effectiveness with stakeholders while reducing red tape for individuals in licensed professions.

Both of these units, L&C and DOPL, perform regulatory, administrative functions. As the Governor and his administration continue to examine possibilities to improve services and simplify government, the similarities between these two regulatory units, L&C and DOPL, were identified for a possible merge. As a result, this legislation is one of the first steps necessary to begin to transition L&C into DOPL. The hope is that transitioning L&C into DOPL will enhance the customer experience and streamline work for our providers across the state. In addition, this transition will relieve a conflict of interest that I have as Director of Health and Welfare. Specifically, I oversee the operations of the three state hospitals and Southwest Idaho Treatment Center, all of which are regulated by L&C.

It's important to note that the decision to transition the L&C to DOPL is in no way related to the performance of employees or leadership, at either L&C or DOPL. In fact, it is because of the quality work and dedicated employees that we believe this transition can be successful. I also want to emphasize that this is a transition with employees shifting to DOPL, rather than a merger where employees find themselves jobless. Our state employees are valuable and dedicated, and we owe them the same loyalty in return. On January 31st, we announced to both L&C staff and DOPL staff the intention to transition the L&C Division to DOPL.

Shifting L&C to DOPL isn't a quick and easy move. It requires legislation, which I am presenting to you today. This legislation covers many sections of Idaho code, but the proposed changes revolve around two primary goals; first, to reflect that the Division of Licensing and Certification is part of the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing rather than the Department of Health and Welfare, and second, to shift authority for L&C from the Board of Health and Welfare to the DOPL Administrator. In addition, I wanted to highlight that foster family licensing will remain with DHW.

If this legislation is approved during this session, the timeline to make this transition is long. We will begin working with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to obtain

their approval. Since CMS contracts with the Department of Health and Welfare to serve as the State Survey Agency for federally-certified providers, we need approval from CMS for Idaho to change the designation of the state survey agency from the Department of Health and Welfare to the Idaho Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses. Our hope is that these steps can be successfully completed during 2022, so that in 2023, we can bring forth the necessary budget proposal to effectuate this change. If all goes as planned, the official shift to DOPL will occur in the summer of 2023 when fiscal year 2024 begins.

Mr. Chair and Committee members, that concludes my presentation. I ask that you approve senate bill 1326 and I am happy to stand for questions.