

**MINUTES OF THE
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INTERIM COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, September 21, 2005 – 9:00 a.m. – Room W020 House Building

Members Present:

Sen. Allen M. Christensen, Senate Chair
Rep. Bradley G. Last, House Chair
Sen. Sheldon L. Killpack
Sen. Peter C Knudson
Sen. Scott D. McCoy
Rep. D. Gregg Buxton
Rep. Wayne A. Harper
Rep. Patricia W. Jones
Rep. David Litvack

Rep. Rebecca D. Lockhart
Rep. Steven R. Mascaro
Rep. Ronda Rudd Menlove
Rep. Paul Ray

Staff Present:

Mr. Mark D. Andrews, Policy Analyst
Ms. Catherine J. Dupont, Associate General Counsel
Mr. Thomas R. Vaughn, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Joy L. Miller, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Christensen called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

MOTION: Rep. Jones moved to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2005 meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Rep. Harper, Rep. Litvack, and Rep. Ray absent for the vote.

2. Medicaid

Mr. Andrews distributed "Making Your Way Through the Medicaid Maze: A Policymaker's Introduction." He said that at 18 percent, Medicaid funding is a significant portion of the state budget. At current relative growth rates, Medicaid's share of total General Fund and school funds appropriations is doubling every 16 years. It is a large source of long-term care funding and assists nearly one in five Medicare beneficiaries. Mr. Andrews pointed out that each state designs its own Medicaid program. Utah has 49 eligibility groups of which 28 are mandatory and 21 are optional. Twenty-five percent of Medicaid enrollees consume 70 percent of the spending. In 2005 \$809 million, or 58 percent, of Medicaid costs were the result of state options. He noted that the elderly and disabled account for 86 percent of optional services spending. Enrollment growth, increasing health care costs, and perhaps prevalence of treatment are driving increased spending. State efforts since 1997 to contain Medicaid costs have saved \$41 million.

Dr. David Sundwall and Mr. Michael Deily, (DOH) Department of Health, responded to questions regarding prevention efforts and early health care access for the HIV/AIDS community.

Mr. Deily discussed some of the prevention measures the DOH has been working on which include smoking cessation, particularly among pregnant women, and programs concerning hemophilia. He pointed out that many of these programs don't result in immediate savings. Dr. Sundwall said an initiative on obesity prevention health care for children is also underway. He also stated that early access to HIV/AIDS medications is essential and indicated that money coming from the federal government next year is encouraging in that area.

Dr. Sundwall pointed out that almost one-third of people in the state who are theoretically eligible for

Medicaid are not yet enrolled. DOH has tried to be creative in its cost-saving measures and is working with the Department of Human Services in an effort to detect deficiencies. He indicated he will be coming back to the Committee with suggestions on how to save monies on pharmaceuticals.

3. Nurse Workforce

Mr. David Gessel, UHA (Utah Hospitals and Health Systems Association), distributed "UHA Nurse Funding Initiative Totals." In 2005, UHA donated over \$1.8 million to public higher education institutions within the state to hire new faculty to address the nursing workforce shortage. UHA has agreed to give \$1 million over the next five years if the Legislature would match it with \$2 million. He stated the shortage in the nurse workforce will be an ongoing issue for years to come. He noted that it is difficult for the nursing schools to hire new faculty on one-time money. Mr. Gessel requested that the Legislature make its original \$500,000 one-time funding in this area an ongoing appropriation.

Mr. Gar Elison, Utah Medical Education Council, distributed data regarding Utah's nurse workforce. There are under 18,000 nurses licensed in the state - 3,500 of whom maintain a license but do not work in Utah. Sixty-one percent of these nurses are over the age of 40. There are approx 2,200 nurses who are working multiple jobs. He said 20 percent of those who receive a license do not renew it after the first renewal period. By ten years after initial licensure, 42 percent are not renewing their license. Dependents do not appear to be a cause for dropping the license. Mr. Elison explained that 86 percent who have dropped licenses no longer live in Utah. He indicated this does not appear to be a problem unique to the RN profession or to Utah. He suggested Utah maintain its effort of training quality, well-prepared graduates.

MOTION: Sen. McCoy moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Christensen adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.