

**MINUTES OF THE  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INTERIM COMMITTEE**  
Wednesday, June 18, 2008 – 2:00 p.m. – Room C250 State Capitol

**Members Present:**

Sen. D. Chris Buttars, Senate Chair  
Sen. Allen M. Christensen  
Sen. Jon J. Greiner  
Sen. Scott D. McCoy  
Rep. John Dougall  
Rep. Jack R. Draxler  
Rep. Julie Fisher  
Rep. Wayne A. Harper  
Rep. David Litvack  
Rep. Rosalind J. McGee  
Rep. Merlynn T. Newbold  
Rep. Phil Riesen

**Members Absent:**

Rep. Paul Ray, House Chair  
Rep. Stephen E. Sandstrom

**Staff Present:**

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

**Note:** A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at [www.le.utah.gov](http://www.le.utah.gov).

**1. Committee Business**

Chair Buttars called meeting to order at 2:25 p.m. Rep. Ray was excused from the meeting.

**MOTION:** Sen. Christensen moved to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2008 meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Rep. Harper and Rep. Newbold were absent for the vote.

Mr. Vaughn indicated that because Ms. Dupont has been assigned to work with the Health System Reform Task Force, he will be handling requests for legislation and committee work related to health issues through the end of the interim.

**2. Health Disparities**

Rep. Rebecca Chavez-Houck said she proposed legislation during the last general session which would better connect patients who need language interpretation services with qualified interpreters. She indicated the following presentations would further clarify how interpretation dovetails into that issue.

Dr. David Sundwall, Utah Department of Health (UDOH), distributed a copy of his presentation "Health Disparities" and the book "Health Status by Race and Ethnicity." He discussed the many languages that are spoken at home in Utah. He said data sources used to gather information are vital records, health care statistics, and surveys. He outlined the ways the state is trying to address health disparities.

Ms. Judy Hilman, Executive Director, Utah Health Policy Project, distributed a copy of her presentation "Promising Practices in State-Based Efforts to Eliminate Health Disparities." She praised the Legislature for funding the Center for Multicultural Health. She said the three pillars of reform are cost, quality, and access at the same time. Ms. Hilman said equity benchmarks in reforms include improving access to care and coverage, improving quality of care, empowering patients and involving them in decision making, improving primary care infrastructure, building minority health infrastructure, and addressing socio-economic determinants of health.

Ms. Sabrina Morales, Multicultural Health Network, discussed her portion of the presentation on "CLAS Standards Overview." She distributed a summary of cultural and linguistic appropriate services (CLAS) standards and a book, "National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care Final Report." Ms. Morales explained that the standards were developed as a result of a nationwide survey of what was happening in the states with the highest immigrant populations. She said implementing CLAS standards is one guaranteed way of eliminating health disparities in the state.

Rep. Litvack said the state needs to help identify where gaps in services exist. The state has the responsibility to be aware of the public health, which includes the entire public.

Rep. Dougall commented that the state needs to untie the hands of entrepreneurs to address health care needs in the state.

Mr. Alan Pruhs, Utah Association for Community Health, discussed what access to affordable culturally competent health care can do for the state's health system.

### **3. Pediatric Mental Health Services**

Ms. Lisa-Michele Church, Executive Director, Department of Human Services (DHS), distributed and discussed, "Utah State Hospital Consolidation Request" and graphs containing information on the Utah State Hospital. The consolidation request includes the demolition of three old buildings with life safety issues and their consolidation into two new buildings. She noted that some have wondered whether the \$50 million requested for the buildings should instead be put into the development of community mental health services for children. She indicated that this should not be seen as an "either/or" choice for the Legislature, but rather as part of a continuum of services already delivered largely by the community and outside the state hospital, where children come for inpatient crisis care and stabilization for usually only a few months.

Mr. Mark Payne, Director, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, DHS, indicated that the Division is working to complete a systematic evaluation of what a system of mental health services for children should look like, and that regardless of whether a new building is constructed at the State Hospital, community services need to be developed so that children don't end up in more restrictive settings.

Ms. Sherri Wittwer, Director, NAMI Utah, said the state needs to decide what the policy is for the treatment of children with serious mental illness prior to investing millions of dollars in rebuilding a structure that will encourage the long-term institutionalization of children for many years to come. She stated most families and mental health professionals would agree that community-based care rather than institutionalization is the preferred way of delivering services.

Ms. Lori Cerrar, Executive Director, Allies With Families, said the President's New Freedom Commission recommends fundamental transformation of the nation's approach to mental health care. It also supports the provision of community-based, family-centered services and the reallocation of service monies to treatments known to work.

Dr. Douglas Goldsmith, Executive Director, The Children's Center, noted that early intervention is

critical to curb aggressive behavior. He stressed the need to increase community-based services capacity by increasing training and supervision, involving primary care providers, and training primary care providers to provide psychotropic medications when necessary and look at the available continuum of care.

Rep. McGee suggested that all concerned groups continue to meet and develop more specific suggestions. She also requested that the Committee be informed of completion of disbursed beds in other parts of the state.

Ms. Karleen Holland, supporter of Tyler's Law, explained that her nephew, Tyler Connelly, died last year of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. She said that her nephew went to three different medical facilities, none of which shared databases that would allow them to know that he had presented at other facilities. Ms. Holland said that she is proposing Tyler's Law, a law which would support the sharing of information among health care providers.

Mr. Vaughn explained that mental health records could fall under legislation adopted during 2008 requiring standards for electronic exchange of clinical health information. He noted, however, that there is no requirement that a provider actually participate in electronic exchange.

Rep. Litvack asked that DHS follow up with UDOH on the incorporation of mental health records in the implementation of the electronic exchange of health records and report back to the Committee.

Chair Buttars asked staff to report back to the Committee on the issue.

**MOTION:** Sen. Christensen moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Buttars adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.