

Minutes
Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor
House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor
Virtual Joint Meeting
Monday, May 4, 2020
1:30 P.M.

Items D, E, and F on the original agenda were withdrawn the Friday prior to the meeting date at the request of the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment. They are lined through on the current agenda.

Committee Members Present in Committee Room A: Senators Missy Irvin, Chair; Representatives Jack Ladyman, Chair; Jeff Wardlaw, Justin Gonzales, and Kenneth Ferguson

Committee Members Present on Zoom: Senators David Wallace, Vice Chair; Bill Sample, Jimmy Hickey, Jr., Kim Hammer, and Ronald Caldwell Representatives Deborah Ferguson, Vice Chair; Austin McCollum, Bruce Coleman, Justin Boyd, Karilyn Brown, Lee Johnson, Mary Bentley, and Michelle Gray.

Other Legislators Present on Zoom: Representative Jim Dotson

Call to Order and Comments Senator Irvin called the meeting to order. The next Public Health meeting will be June 8th at 9:00 a.m.

Consideration to Adopt Meeting Minutes from March 09, 2020 [Exhibit C] Without objection, the minutes were adopted.

Department of Human Services, Division of Medical Services, Review of Rule [Exhibit G] Janet Mann, Director, Division of Medical Services at Department of Human Services, discussed billing changes to Global OB (obstetrics) services. This would allow OBGYN professionals within Arkansas to bill patients electronically rather than manually if a beneficiary's category changes during their pregnancy.

Senator Irvin stated that without objection the rule stands as reviewed.

Department of Human Services, Division of Medical Services, Review of Rule [Exhibit H] Janet Mann, Director, Division of Medical Services at Department of Human Services, discussed updating the procedure codes in the Ambulatory Surgical Center Provider Manual which implements Act 1236 of 2015. Future updates will be implemented by utilizing the link allowing for more timely updates each year.

Senator Irvin stated that without objection the rule stands as reviewed.

Arkansas Department of Health, Division of Pharmacy Services and Drug Control, Review of Rule [Exhibit I] Shane David, Pharm. D., Pharmacy Services Section Chief, Arkansas Department of Health, discussed adding several controlled substances and specific language for better clarification.

Senator Irvin stated that without objection the rule stands as reviewed.

Arkansas Department of Health, Division of Health Facility Services, Review of Rule

[Exhibit J] Becky Bennett, Section Chief, Health Facility Services at Arkansas Department of Health, defined the two classes of home health agencies within Arkansas; Class A and Class B. Class A is certified by Medicare to provide skilled or professional care along with personal care. Class B is not certified by Medicare, but provides personal and attendance care. Class B may also provide skilled care. Both types require permits of approval. Act 811 of 2019 was applied to skilled care in order to segregate services by provider type such as personal care and home health.

Senator Irvin stated that without objection the rule stands as reviewed.

Arkansas Department of Health, Division of Health Facility Services, Review of Rule

[EXHIBIT K] Becky Bennett, Section Chief, Health Facility Services at Arkansas Department of Health, discussed Act 811 of 2019 which created a rural working group made up of members from the private care agency industry. The group incorporated what needed to be changed in the private care rules which originated from home health rules. Revisions have been made specifically for nonskilled care agencies. The Department of Health approved the draft rules previously presented.

Senator Irvin stated that without objection the rule stands as reviewed.

Arkansas Department of Health, Division of Health Related Board and Commissions/State Board of Nursing, Review of Rules [EXHIBIT L]

Sue Tedford, MNSc, APRN, Director, Arkansas State Board of Nursing (ASBN), discussed changes that are a result of Acts 250, 837, 315, 308, and 583 of 2019. This includes a definition of professional boundaries for nurses and the addition of minimum standards of establishing patient relationships.

Senator Irvin stated that without objection the rule stands as reviewed.

Other Business: Division of Workforce Services, Department of Human Services (DHS), and Department of Health were invited to discuss policy information amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Charisse Childers with Workforce Services relayed information in reference to the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance stating testing is currently underway for the system. This system will cover those who do not normally pay into unemployment; specifically those who are unemployed, independent contractors, and those who would not normally be covered by regular unemployment. Representatives of DHS discussed policy changes to payments and reporting forms. Telemedicine requirements have been relaxed, so Medicaid recipients may better receive treatment in their homes. Mobile clinics have been enacted; nursing services have been provided in homes; and disenrollment from Medicaid has been halted until the end of the public health emergency. Signatures on prescriptions are also not being required at this time. Additionally, SNAP benefits have been reevaluated to ensure recipients receive maximum benefits. Once the public health emergency has subsided, all rule suspensions will expire unless an extension is needed. The Department of Health discussed directives in reference to reopening the state. This includes the guidelines for elective surgeries.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m.