

**MINUTES**  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR**  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR**  
**Meeting Jointly**  
**Monday, February 7, 2022**  
**10:00 AM**  
**Room A, MAC**  
**Little Rock, Arkansas**

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Committee members present: Senators Cecile Bledsoe, Chair; Breanne Davis, Kim Hammer, Dan Sullivan, and Ben Gilmore; Representatives Jack Ladyman, Chair, Deborah Ferguson, Vice-Chair; Fred Allen, Mary Bentley, Justin Boyd, Bruce Coleman, Marsh Davis, Jim Dotson, Michelle Gray, Justin Gonzales, John Payton, Clint Penzo, Mark Perry, Aaron Pilkington, Jeff Wardlaw, and Carlton Wing

Other members present: Senator Alan Clark; Representatives Denise Ennett, Kenneth Ferguson, Tippi McCullough, David Ray, and Jamie Scott

Senator Bledsoe called the meeting to order.

**Approval of Minutes for the January 3, 2022, Meeting Minutes [Exhibit C]**

Representative Mary Bentley made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by , and the motion carried.

**COVID-19 Treatments, Effectiveness, and Availability [Handout 1]**

Dr. José R. Romero, MD, Secretary of Health, Arkansas Department of Health (ADH); Dr. Jennifer Dillaha, MD, Chief Medical Officer, ADH; and Dr. Atul Kothari, MD, Medical Director, Healthcare Associated Infection Program, ADH; discussed the various treatments for COVID-19 and their effectiveness, as well as the availability of prescription treatments throughout the state.

**Prescription Treatments for COVID-19**

Dr. John Vinson, PharmD, Chief Executive Officer, Arkansas Pharmacists Association; and Dr. Howell Foster, PharmD, Associate Professor, Pharmacy Practice, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS); discussed the availability of prescription treatments for COVID-19 throughout the state.

**Overview of Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

Ms. Amanda Warren, President, Arkansas Ambulance Association (ArAA); Ms. Jamie Pafford-Gresham, Board Member, Co-Chair Legislative Committee; and Mr. Ken Kelley, Secretary/Treasurer, Co-Chair Legislative Committee, ArAA; provided an overview of the issues EMS is facing as well as the current status of EMS around the state.

**Update on the Community and Employment Supports Medicaid Waiver**

Mr. Mark White, Deputy Director and Chief of Staff, Legal and Legislative Affairs, DHS; and Ms. Melissa Stone, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, DHS; provided an update on the current plans to reduce or eliminate the waiting list for the Community and Employment Supports Medicaid Waiver.

**Empower Healthcare Solutions as an Arkansas PASSE (Provider-led Shared Savings Entity) [Handout 2]**

Mr. Mark White, Deputy Director and Chief of Staff, Legal and Legislative Affairs, DHS; Ms. Dawn Stehle, DrPH, Deputy Director for Health and Medicaid Director, DHS; Ms. Sarah Linam, Chief Counsel, DHS; and

Ms. Elizabeth Pitman, Director, Division of Medical Services, DHS; reported on the current status of the Empower Healthcare Solutions as an Arkansas Passe.

**Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), Review of Rule [Exhibit I]**

Mr. Chuck Thompson, JD, Managing Attorney, ADH; and Ms. Shelly Matthews, Women's Health Nurse Program Facilitator, ADH; discussed the proposed rule governing the practice of licensed lay midwifery in Arkansas.

Senator Bledsoe stated that without objection, the rule stands as reviewed.

**Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), Review of Rule [Exhibit J]**

Ms. Laura Shue, JD, General Counsel, ADH; and Mr. Terry Paul, Environmental Health Branch Chief, ADH; discussed the proposed rule which clarifies the Certified Food Manager requirements.

Senator Bledsoe stated that without objection, the rule stands as reviewed.

**Other Business [Handouts 3-5]**

Handouts 3-5 regarding COVID-19 Vaccine policies at UAMS and DHS, including the DHS exemption form, were distributed but were not discussed during the meeting.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.