

MINUTES

HOUSE & SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE AND LABOR

September 24, 2015

The House and Senate Interim Committees on Public Health, Welfare and Labor met Thursday, September 24, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. in the Lobby Gallery of the Main Hospital Lobby at UAMS, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Public Health Senate Members Attending Were: Senators Cecile Bledsoe, Chair; Stephanie Flowers, Vice Chair; John Cooper, and David Sanders.

Public Health House Members Attending Were: Representatives Kelley Linck, Chair; Deborah Ferguson, Vice Chair; Mary Bentley, Justin Boyd, Ken Bragg, David Branscum, Charlene Fite, Kim Hammer, Fredrick Love, Robin Lundstrum, David Meeks, Betty Overbey, Chris Richey, and Dan Sullivan.

Other Legislators Attending Were: Senators Linda Chesterfield and Joyce Elliott. Representatives Charles Armstrong, Eddie Armstrong, Bob Ballinger, Scott Baltz, Charlotte Vining Douglas, Dan Douglas, Kenneth Ferguson, Vivian Flowers, Michael John Gray, Greg Leding, Reginald Murdock, Micah Neal, Matthew Pitsch, James Ratliff, Sue Scott, and John Vines.

Comments by the Chairs

Senator Cecile Bledsoe called the meeting to order, and gave special recognition to the medical students who were present at the meeting. Representative Kelley Linck acknowledged the importance of and the need for more rural health care.

Consideration to Approve the September 8 2015 Meeting Minutes (EXHIBIT C)

Senator Bledsoe stated that without objection the minutes from the September 8, 2015 meeting are approved.

Introduction and Overview of University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS)

Dan Rahn, M.D., Chancellor, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, outlined and discussed the programs at UAMS, the medical students, patient data, hospital services; and the capabilities, future growth, & challenges of UAMS.

Dr. Rahn presented and discussed the need for Arkansas to expand UAMS medical services statewide. He also discussed the urgent need to expand residency programs for medical students in Arkansas, to accommodate the increasing number of graduating medical students. Dr. Rahn stated that Georgia, Texas, and numerous other states across the nation have already expanded medical student residency programs.

Overview of Legislative Day Program--Medical Student Legislative Day Committee

The following medical students gave a brief summary of their background and medical school experience thus far:

- ◆ Ben Schurhamer – 4th year medical student, born in Minnesota, living in Arkansas for the past 7 years
- ◆ Evan Branscum – 3rd year medical student from Marshall, Arkansas
- ◆ Parth Shah – 4th year medical student, lives in Arkansas

Discussion of Graduate Medical Education

Parth Shah shared with the members of the Public Health Committees, his reasons for attending medical school. This desire began when he was a child in India as he saw the medical disparities in his neighborhood and his country. He also echoed the need for expansion of residency programs for Arkansas medical students.

James Clardy, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education gave a brief overview of his background and medical experience.

Dr. Clardy stated:

- ◆ UAMS has approximately 640 resident medical students.
- ◆ Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) largely pays for resident training
- ◆ Since 1997 federal government funding has not changed.
- ◆ Primary Care Physician (PCP) training is fully funded
- ◆ Specialty training is only partially funded.
- ◆ Children's hospital funds some of the UAMS residencies.
- ◆ More funding for medical student residency is needed.

Dr. Clardy also noted that in 2003 the number of hours that a medical student in residency may work, was capped at 80 hours a week, as opposed to the 120 hours that most residents were accustomed to working.

Dr. Rahn said that UAMS constantly keeps 2 main issues before the Arkansas congressional delegates, one is funding for medical education and the other is funding for the National Institute of Health. Dr. Rahn went on to detail the funding streams and the funding problems of Arkansas

Discussion of the Barriers and Challenges Facing the Future of Rural Medical Practice in Arkansas

Evan Branscum, Representative David Branscum's son, shared with the members of the Public Health Committees, his early college history and his reasons for choosing a Rural Practice. He said that he knew in his sophomore year in high school that he wanted to work in health care, because he liked helping people. When he became aware of the physician shortage in rural areas, he decided to go into rural medicine.

Telemedicine Overview and Demonstration (*PowerPoint Presentation*)

Curtis Lowery, M.D., Professor and Chair, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, ANGELS Director, discussed the advantages and life-saving technology of telemedicine, especially as it relates to rural medicine. Dr. Lowery showed a real-time ultrasound of a baby at a facility in Fayetteville. The committees then viewed a video recording of a stroke victim being treated.

UAMS has a 24/7 medical team on their telemedicine shifts, and they have treated 900 patients via telemedicine since its inception. Telemedicine is allowing specialty care to be more accessible in rural areas through real-time video conferencing.

Tour of Practical Education Labs--Simulation Center Lab and the Gross Anatomy Lab

Members and staff of the Public Health, Welfare & Labor Committees formed two groups. One group toured the Simulation Center Lab and the other group toured the Gross Anatomy Lab.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.