

MINUTES
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR
MEETING JOINTLY

OCTOBER 7, 2019

The Senate and House Committees on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor met jointly on

Monday, October 7, 2019, at 1:30 p.m., at the Jonesboro Human Development Center, 4701 Colony Drive, Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Committee members present: Senator Missy Irvin, Co-Chair, Ronald Caldwell, and David Wallace. Representatives Jack Ladyman, Co-Chair, Karilyn Brown, Bruce Coleman, Stephen Magie, Clint Penzo, Jeff Wardlaw, Richard Womack

Other legislators present: Senator John Cooper. Representatives Marsh Davis, Jimmy Gazaway, Johnny Rye, Brandt Smith, Dan Sullivan, Dwight Tosh

Call to Order: Representative Ladyman called the meeting to order.

Comments by the Chairs

Representative Ladyman thanked the members for attending the meeting and asked the legislators to introduce themselves. Senator Irvin told legislators the committee plans to hold meeting throughout the state to highlight healthcare in all areas.

Consideration to Adopt the September 9, 2019, Meeting Minutes [Exhibit C]

A motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by Representative Wardlaw. Without objection the motion carried.

Welcome to Craighead County

Representative Ladyman recognized County Judge Marvin Day. Judge Day thanked the legislators for holding the committee meeting in Jonesboro. He described a grant Craighead County received which resulted in an expansion for the opening of a Crisis Stabilization Unit at St. Bernards Medical Center. The new center provides care in 20 counties for persons suffering with mental health issues, drug issues, and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) issues. Judge Day stated prior the opening of the center there were few options for this type of care

Discussion of the Human Development Centers and Specifically the Jonesboro Human Development Center

Representative Ladyman recognized Tammy Benbrook, Assistant Director for the Human Development Centers, Division of Developmental Disabilities Service, Department of Human Services (DHS), Thomas Tarpley, Deputy Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, DHS, and Steven Farmer, Superintendent, Jonesboro Human Development Center, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, DHS. Ms. Benbrook gave an overview of the Human Development Centers (HDC) throughout the state. There are a total of 2,000 employees serving the HDCs. She reviewed aspects of the HDC centers throughout the state:

- A new program DHS developed is called the Blue Umbrella. A grand opening was held the beginning of 2019. It provides HDC clients with more opportunities to earn money and strengthen their job skills by providing artwork, crafts, and crops grown in community gardens at the HDC centers. Three farmers markets were held this summer and a Fall Festival was held in September, 2019.

Ms. Benbrook reviewed the HDC centers located throughout the state:

- The HDC in Arkadelphia has been in operation for 50 years and serves 115 clients. Its work programs include crafts, recycling programs, laundry services, mail room workers, and new programs making candles and t-shirts to be sold in its store.
- The Southeast Arkansas HDC had been in operation for 40 years and serves 96 clients. It is the smallest HDC. Its work programs include recycling and community gardens. In 2019, the HDC clients worked a 1/4th of an acre of Bradley tomatoes. There are also contracts with a local Cola company in Warren where clients provide piece work packing items for the company.

- The Conway HDC is the largest center serving 470 clients, which includes 45 children. It is the only HDC serving children. It has its own school and special education teachers. There is also an infirmary with a mental fragile unit. Work programs include a greenhouse, community gardening, custodial and dietary programs. It has been in operation for 60 years.
- The Booneville Development Center is the former tuberculosis hospital with buildings on the national historical register. It has a beautiful campus and serves 130 clients. It is known for rugs created on large looms which are sold in the facility's store.

Legislators and Mr. Tarpley discussed the professional employment positions such as, speech therapy and physical therapy. Mr. Tarpley stated that in general hiring the professional specialists has not been an issue however, in certain geographic areas there are fewer candidates. Mr. Tarpley was asked to report on the condition of the facilities at the centers. He reported there is a process being implemented in all of the centers to develop a Master Plan. The goal is to complete the process in all of the centers within one year to eighteen months. Professionals are assessing the needs of all of the facilities. Mr. Tarpley indicated funding for building new structures or rehabbing as recommended through the Master Plan's has thus far been adequate to meet their needs.

Mr. Farmer told legislators there are additional measures being addressed through a strategic plan to ensure there are funds available to meet the needs of the facilities and clients.

In response to a question, Mr. Farmer shared some historical background of the Jonesboro HDC. The facility opened in 1974 as the Children's Colony:

- Oversight of the facility changed in the 1980s from a Mental Retardation Board to Developmental Disabilities then to the Human Development Center (HDC)
- It became more feasible to serve children at the Conway HDC and children being served were transferred to the Conway HDC
- Clients at the Jonesboro HDC are eighteen or above and are diagnosed with either a developmental or intellectual disability

Update on Hepatitis A Prevention

Representative Ladyman recognized Michael Cima, Phd, MPH, Chief Epidemiologist, Outbreak Response and Public Health Preparedness, Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and Cat Waters, BSN, RN, Section Chief, Outbreak Response, ADH. Dr. Cima gave a PowerPoint presentation beginning with background information on the Hepatitis A national outbreak and its impact in Arkansas.

Hepatitis A cases present symptoms such as fever, reduced appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and the classic symptom is jaundice, a yellowing of the skin or the whites of the eyes. The time in which a person is exposed until they develop symptoms takes approximately one month from the time of exposure, which makes it very difficult to respond from a public health perspective. Unlike Hepatitis B or C there is no chronic stage of Hepatitis A. In the 1990s close personal contact and contaminated food products were the predominant way people got hepatitis A. Since the Hepatitis A vaccine became available some of the larger national outbreaks of hepatitis A have been related to contaminated food products. In late 2016, an increase of Hepatitis A cases were seen in high risk groups including persons using drugs, men having sex with men, and the homeless population. Since 2016, thirty states have declared Hepatitis A outbreaks among high risk individuals with over 26,000 cases recorded in the U.S. Most of the cases in Arkansas were due to international travel until February, 2018 when an outbreak was identified in Clay County. Currently, there have been 421 cases identified in Arkansas. Dr. Cima described a map indicating the counties that have been impacted the most. Over 100 cases have been identified in each of the counties. Dr. Cima provided data for risk factors:

- Drug use with 250 individuals who have either self-reported or tested positive from a hospital stay
- 21 food handlers

A graph showing the number of cases diagnosed on a weekly basis beginning February, 2018 through the present indicates the peak of the number of cases in October, 2018 with 13 cases per week. The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) began monitoring the local and national outbreak trends. Dr. Cima participates in a bi-weekly telephone call with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for updates and initiatives developed in other states to combat the

outbreaks. The ADH is providing health alert messages across the state, engaging stakeholders within the field, public health nurses, hospitals, and emergency rooms. The ADH has obtained grant funds to conduct vaccination efforts. The vaccine has been provided free at several venues. One avenue is in the inmate population in jails, prisons, and homeless shelters. Since February, 2018, 33 mass clinics have been held with many concentrated in the northeastern part of the state. An additional 27 clinics were held in jails with 1,500 inmates vaccinated. A total of 35,000 vaccinations have been provided to high risk individuals. The outbreak has cost the state over \$4 million since February, 2018.

Nurse Practitioners Education and Training Requirements

Representative Ladyman recognized Leonie DeClerk, DNP, APRN, FNP-Bc. Ms. DeClerk gave a PowerPoint presentation with a detailed review of the education and training obtained by nurse practitioners. The 2017-2018 Annual Report by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing indicated 42,000 Nurse Practitioners were licensed in Arkansas, 39,000 of that number are Arkansas residents. Licensure requirements for Certified Nurse Practitioners include:

- Registered nursing license
- A minimum of 2,000 hours practice as a registered nurse
- National certification

Current Statistics for Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Licenses as of June 30, 2018 indicate 3,009 certified nurse practitioners in Arkansas. The core education requirements for Advanced Practice Nurses include:

- Master's or doctoral degree
- Advanced physiology and pathophysiology
- Advanced pharmacology
- Advanced health assessment

Certified nurse practitioner education requirements include a minimum of 500 hours of clinical experiences in direct-care, specialties in adult acute, primary care, pediatric acute, or mental health care. Scope of practice for an APRN must be consistent with the definition of the practice or advanced practice registered nursing. The APRN may provide healthcare for which the APRN is educationally prepared and for which competence has been attained and maintained. The scope of practice is defined and regulated by Arkansas State Board of Nursing (ArSBN).

Committee members were provided a tour of the HDC facility. Representative Ladyman reminded legislators of the committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 8, 2019 beginning at 8:30 a.m. in the Student Union on the Arkansas State University campus.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

MINUTES

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

Tuesday, October 8, 2019 8:30 A.M.
Student Union, Arkansas State University
Jonesboro, Arkansas

The Senate and House Committees on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor met jointly on Tuesday, October 8, 2019, at 8:30 a.m., in the Reng Student Union Building, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Committee members present: Senators Missy Irvin, Co-Chair and Kim Hammer. Representatives Jack Ladyman, Co-Chair, Karilyn Brown, Bruce Coleman, Justin Gonzales, Lee Johnson, Austin McCollum, Clint Penzo,

Other legislators present: Senator John Cooper. Representatives Brandt Smith, Dan Sullivan and Dwight Tosh.

Call to Order: Representative Ladyman called the meeting to order.

Comments by the Chairs

Representative Ladyman asked the legislators to introduce themselves and advised legislators this is the first committee meeting being held outside of Little Rock. Senator Irvin explained that she and Representative Ladyman will schedule future meetings in areas across the state, which will provide the committee opportunities to learn about healthcare and labor issues affecting those communities.

Welcome to Jonesboro

Representative Ladyman recognized Mayor Harold Perrin, City of Jonesboro who gave a welcome address. Mayor Perrin described assets the City of Jonesboro provides with a major medical presence and strong industrial base, both of which continue to grow within the community. Vision 20/30, an 80 member committee Mayor Perrin created in 2010 actively works to enhance opportunities within the city.

Hospitals in Jonesboro Region

Representative Ladyman recognized Chris Barber, MPA, FACHE, President and CEO, St. Bernards Medical Center, Brad Parsons, FACHE, CEO/Administrator, NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital, and Michael Wiggins, MBA, FACHE, President of LeBonheur Children's Hospital (Memphis).

Mr. Barber gave an overview of St. Bernards Medical Center operating as a faith-based non-profit facility for 119 years. The center serves 17 counties in northeast Arkansas with a 438 bed hospital. A 62 bed behavioral health facility is located adjacent to the Arkansas State University (ASU) campus. St. Bernards is classified as a level three trauma center. The center leases and operates a hospital in Wynne, Arkansas and manages a facility in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. Activities within the community include senior centers, retirement living, residential and low income housing.

Mr. Parsons gave an overview of the NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital from the time he accepted the position as its CEO seven years ago. He reviewed the changes the hospital has undergone:

- The health system developed from an 88 bed hospital five years ago to a 228 bed facility
- An addition to the health system is a new medical campus
- NEA Baptist is now part of the Baptist Memorial Healthcare system based in Memphis, Tennessee
- There are 22 hospital within the Healthcare system serving Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas
- A model has been developed called Integrated Healthcare System with a campus designed for a medical group with the health system connected directly to the hospital
- The medical group consists of 110 physicians about 85 advanced practice providers

Mr. Wiggins gave an overview of the Le Bonheur Children's Hospital based in Memphis, Tennessee:

- care for children throughout the mid-south, the nation, and internationally
- a nationally ranked children's hospital with a pediatric heart program ranked as one of the ten best in the U.S.
- the neuroscience program serves children throughout the world with the busiest pediatric brain tumor surgery program in the country, in part due to a strong relationship with the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee
- the Memphis hospital location has been in operation since the 1950s with 255 beds devoted to children
- the hospital is classified as a level one trauma center with one of the first trauma center networks providing care for over 17,000 individuals in 2018 from Arkansas and 1,000 from Jonesboro
- in 2018, the hospital treated children from 68 Arkansas counties
- Pediatric specialties include cardiology, gastroenterology, and plans to expand into other areas

Legislators discussed Arkansas Medicaid expansion and the Arkansas Works Program with the hospital administrators and its impact on emergency room operations:

St. Bernards Medical Center has seen a reduction in emergency room visits with the advent of urgent care services available in Jonesboro and northeast Arkansas. The support of the Arkansas Legislature with the Medicaid expansion and Arkansas Works programs has made an impact on St. Bernards Healthcare System. Access to reimbursements for hospitals, physicians and providers has been successful in addressing the needs of healthcare systems.

NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital has benefited from the Arkansas Works program acting as a building block for changes to the healthcare model. The Arkansas Works program is critical to ensure reimbursement for hospitals, physicians, and healthcare providers.

Approximately 80% of children who receive service at the Le Bonheur Children's Hospital are Medicaid beneficiaries. The hospital focuses on the delivery of care directly related to Medicaid beneficiaries. Le Bonheur Children's Hospital developed a pilot program focused on children hospitalized with asthma enabling families to manage the condition outside the hospital and reducing the number of hospital visits.

Legislators and hospital administrators discussed the impact and challenges of funding sources available to hospitals as economic models continually change. Hospitals also face problems recruiting physicians and specialists because Arkansas has the lowest reimbursement rate in the U.S.

Representative Johnson discussed issues in Arkansas with its need for emergency room physicians. An opportunity exists to develop and use community paramedics but there is no method currently available to reimburse these services. Development of crisis stabilization units throughout the state could divert cases from hospital emergency rooms. Due to the shortage of specialists in many areas, individuals have to be transported out of their communities, which increases transportation costs.

Discussion of the Shortages of Medical Professionals in Rural Areas

Representative Ladyman recognized Amanda Deel, DO, Assistant Professor and Associate Dean, New York Institute of Technology (NYIT), College of Osteopathic Medicine in Jonesboro, Brad Parsons, FACHE, CEO/Administrator, Northeast Arkansas Baptist Memorial Hospital, and Chris Barber, MPA, FACHE, President and CEO, St. Bernards Healthcare.

Dr. Deel gave an overview of the mission of NYIT to address the shortage of physicians, including:

- physicians are aging out with no pipeline of physicians to replace them
- the institute is introducing students to rural medicine in their early training
- rural medicine groups in colleges throughout the state place students in communities
- educating students by placing them around physicians currently serving in those areas provides students an opportunity to determine whether or not they would be interested in becoming a part of a rural community\

- NYIT is developing a Rural Training Track (RRT) where students can learn early on in their career if they are interested in serving in rural areas
- an RRT is a residency program that reaches out to rural communities to place physicians nearing graduation and licensing in an Arkansas rural community for the majority of their training to work and live in the community
- NYIT partners with Baptist Memorial Health System and continue to take a team approach to tackle the workforce shortage

Mr. Barber explained the process St. Bernards Healthcare is pursuing for physician recruitment:

- currently 830 physicians serve in Northeast Arkansas
- every two years, St. Bernards brings in an independent group who review physicians within the area, the community's demographics, and forecasts population trends over a five-year period
- reviews include the age of physicians, their specialties and feedback obtained through interviews and surveys
- calculations determine the number of neurosurgeons needed per population numbers of 100,000
- these measures drive the health systems improvement plans
- St. Bernards will recruit 15 to 24 new physicians in Jonesboro annually
- St. Bernard has a residency program with a 40 year track record with the University of Arkansas Medical System (UAMS)

Brad Parsons gave an overview of the NEA Baptist Memorial System's residency training including an internal medicine residency program in its second year with expansions planned for the future.

Discussion of the Importance of Jonesboro to the Economic Development of Northeast Arkansas and Factory Tour

Representative Ladyman recognized Mark Young, President and CEO, Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce who discussed the economy in Jonesboro and the region, which includes:

- workforce development provided by ASU
- over 100,000 employees in the manufacturing industry with 96 manufacturing facilities in the Jonesboro Industrial Park
- Jonesboro Unlimited, an organization recently completed a strategic plan in its 3rd year of implementation focusing on healthcare logistics and agricultural professional services

Van Tour of Jonesboro Industries

Legislators were provided a tour of the Hytrol Conveyor Company in the Jonesboro Industrial Park.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.