

## MINUTES

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

June 13, 2016

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The House and Senate Interim Committees on Public Health, Welfare and Labor met Monday, June 13, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in Committee Room A of The Big MAC Building, Little Rock, Arkansas.

**Public Health Senate Members Attending Were:** Senators Cecile Bledsoe, Chair; Stephanie Flowers, Vice Chair; John Cooper, Keith Ingram, Missy Irvin, and Gary Stubblefield.

**Public Health House Members Attending Were:** Representatives Fredrick Love, Vice Chair; Mary Bentley, Ken Bragg, Kim Hammer, Stephen Magie, David Meeks, Josh Miller, Betty Overbey, John Payton, and Dan Sullivan.

**Other Legislators Attending Were:** Senators Jonathan Dismang, Jane English, and Eddie Joe Williams. Representatives Kenneth Ferguson, Vivian Flowers, Bill Gossage, Jack Ladyman, Mark McElroy, George McGill, Micah Neal, Sue Scott, James Sorvillo, and Marshall Wright.

#### **Comments by the Chairs**

Senator Cecile Bledsoe called the meeting to order, and announced the resignation of Kelley Linck from the General Assembly and as House Chair of the Public Health, Welfare & Labor Committee. He has been appointed as Chief Legislative and Interim-Governmental Affairs Officer at the Department of Human Services. Deborah Ferguson will assume the role of House Public Health Chair, and Fredrick Love will assume the role of House Vice Chair of the Public Health Committee. Speaker Gilliam stated previously that the job of Chair of the House Public Health Committee will remain vacant until January 2017.

#### **Consideration to Adopt the May 18, 2016 Meeting Minutes (EXHIBIT C)**

Without objection, the minutes from the May 18, 2016, meeting was approved.

#### **Yearly Report of the Vision Screenings for Arkansas Public and Charter Schools for School Year 2015-2016 (EXHIBIT D)**

Paula Smith, MNSc, RNP, State School Nurse Consultant with the Arkansas Department of Education and the Arkansas Department of Health, and Dr. Kenny Wyatt, an Arkansas Optometrist and the Chair of the Eye & Vision Commission; presented the Vision Screenings Report for School Year 2015-2016.

Ms. Smith explained the vision screening process for Arkansas Public and Charter Schools. She also referenced statistical data that resulted from the annual vision screenings of Arkansas students. Annually screened grade levels are:

- Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten
- First & Second grades
- Fourth, Sixth, & Eighth grades

Ms. Smith stated that if a teacher or a school nurse notices a student squinting to see assignments, and/or if they repeatedly have headaches; the school nurse will give that student a vision screening (regardless of the grade level). Dr. Wyatt stated there are multiple sources of funding for eyeglasses for children, and are available through the school system, for children who cannot afford to buy glasses.

Following committee discussion, the committees recommended review of the report.

### **Opioid Addiction in Arkansas (HANDOUT)**

G. Richard Smith, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, Internal Medicine, and Public Health at UAMS, and Denise Robertson, P.D., Administrator of the Arkansas Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), Arkansas Department of Health, conducted this presentation. The information in the opioid addiction presentation is from national, state, and county level data.

#### Naturally occurring opioids are derived from opium:

- Codeine, Morphine, Methadone, and Heroin
  - Heroin is illegal and it's abuse is rising to epidemic status

#### Synthetic opioids are man-made:

- Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, Fentanyl, Hydromorphone, and Oxymorphone

Dr. Smith and Ms. Robertson gave an overview of the epidemic-size problem of opioid addiction in the United States. Arkansas ranks in the midrange of states in this 50 state ranking of the opioid epidemic. The Arkansas Department of Health recommends the following:

- Arkansas needs more treatment and treatment programs
- Arkansas needs more flexibility with the use of Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) (will require enabling legislation)
- Arkansas needs modest resources to address the problem
- Arkansas needs to encourage organizations to fully cooperate

Dr. Smith volunteered to work with the legislators this fall and on into the session to help stem the tide of the opioid epidemic. Senator Bledsoe welcomed this suggestion.

### **Review of the Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Commission Quarterly Report for July 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015 (Act 728 of 2015) (HANDOUT)**

Misty Hunt Murphy, Executive Director, Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Commission, presented this quarterly report to the committees.

At the request of Representative Kim Hammer, Senator Bledsoe agreed it would be best to hold this report over until the next Public Health Committee meeting in July. Without objection the committee members agreed; so as to ensure a complete review of the facts and figures contained in the quarterly report.

### **Department of Human Services, Division of County Operations, Review of Rules Regarding Medical Services Policy, Section E-523, Personal Property Exclusions (EXHIBIT G)**

Dave Mills, Program Administrator, Division of County Operations, Department of Human Services (DHS), presented the update to Section 3-523 of the Medical Services Policy. This change codifies that the resource exclusion for household goods and personal effects no longer has a dollar limit amount. The proposed effective date of this change is August 1, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55.