

MINUTES
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR
Meeting Jointly
Monday, November 25, 2024
10:00 AM
Room A, MAC
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Missy Irvin, Chair; Bryan King, Dave Wallace; Representatives Lee Johnson, Chair; Fred Allen, Mary Bentley, Jon S. Eubanks, Deborah Ferguson, Kenneth B. Ferguson, Zack Gramlich, Jack Ladyman, Mark Perry, Aaron Pilkington, Bart Schulz, Jeff Wardlaw

Other members present: Senator Linda Chesterfield, Jim Dotson, and Kim Hammer; Representatives Glenn Barnes-Elect, Lincoln Barnett-Elect, Stan Berry, Keith Brooks, Matt Duffield, Jack Fortner, Julie Mayberry, Jesse McGruder-Elect, Jay Richardson, Johnny Rye, Tara Shephard, Joy Springer, Dwight Tosh, Jim Wooten

Consideration to Approve the October 28, 2024, Meeting Minutes [Exhibit B]

Representative Ladyman made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Representative Pilkington and the motion carried.

Presentation on the Arkansas Poison and Drug Information Center (APDIC) [Exhibit C]

Howell Foster, Pharm. D., DABAT, Director, Arkansas Poison Control Center, UAMS; Kevan Beth Meadors, M.D., UAMS; Ari B. Filip, M.D., UAMS; and Andy Davis, Vice Chancellor of Institutional Relations and Chief Government Affairs Officer, UAMS; discussed the role of the APDIC and how it provides care for the state.

Request for Approval of a Program to Reduce or Eliminate Prior Authorizations for a Healthcare Provider Pursuant to Act 575 of 2023 [Exhibits D1-D5]

Brad Nye, Government Relations Director, Summit Community Care; David Donohue, President, CareSource; Cory Cox, Director of Government Relations, CareSource; Mitch Morris, Chief Executive Officer, Empower Healthcare Solutions; Jack Hopkins, Director, Arkansas Total Care; and Lauren Grounds, LPC, Senior Director of Medical Management, Arkansas Total Care; gave an overview of their updated policies regarding prior authorizations.

Representative Ladyman made a motion recommending approval of the Summit Community Care prior authorization proposal, seconded by Representative Bentley and the motion passed.

Representative Ladyman made a motion recommending approval of the CareSource prior authorization proposal, seconded by Representative Bentley and the motion passed.

Representative Ladyman made a motion recommending approval of the Empower Healthcare Solutions prior authorization proposal, seconded by Representative Bentley and the motion passed.

Representative Ladyman made a motion recommending approval of the Arkansas Total Care prior authorization proposal, seconded by Representative Bentley, and the motion passed.

Department of Energy & Environment (E&E), Division of Environmental Quality, Review of Rule, Rule No. 36, Tire Accountability Program [Exhibit E]

Bailey Taylor, Director and Chief Administrator of the Environment, Division of Environmental Quality, E&E, and Lauren Ballard, Chief of Staff, E&E, discussed amending rules related to the tire accountability program.

Senator Irvin stated that, without objection, this rule stands reviewed.

Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Medical Services, Review of Rule, Emergency Medical Technicians as Other Licensed Practitioners [Exhibit F]

Elizabeth Pitman, Director, Division of Medical Services, DHS, and Lori McDonald, Chief of Staff, DHS, discussed rules amending the Arkansas Medicaid State Plan adding Emergency Medical Technicians to the list of other licensed practitioners.

Senator Irvin stated that, without objection, this rule stands reviewed.

DHS, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, Review of Rule, Autism Services for Children on Medicaid & REPEALS: FBI Background Check Form; First Connections Program Under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act [Exhibit G]

Melissa Weatherton, Director, Specialty Medicaid Services, DHS; Jennifer Brez'ee, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, DHS; Thomas Tarpley, Deputy Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, DHS; and Lori McDonald, Chief of Staff, DHS; discussed rules pertaining to services for children with disabilities.

Senator Irvin stated that, without objection, this rule stands reviewed.

Consideration to Approve Arkansas Legislative Study on Mental and Behavioral Health Pursuant to Act 512 of 2023 [Exhibits H1-H2]

Representative Ladyman made a motion to approve the legislative study, seconded by Representative Bentley, and the motion passed.

Discussion of Disability Rights Arkansas, Inc. [Exhibit I] [Handouts I1-I3]

Tom Masseau, Executive Director, Disability Rights Arkansas, and Thomas Nichols, Director of Legal and Advocacy Services, Disability Rights Arkansas, discussed the history of Disability Rights Arkansas and outlined their priorities for the 2025 fiscal year.

Consideration for Adoption of Interim Study Proposals (ISP) [Exhibits J1-J24]

Senator Irvin stated that without objection, ISP 2023-125, ISP 2023-126, ISP 2023-129, ISP 2023-130, ISP 2023-132, ISP 2023-142, ISP 2023-146, ISP 2023-128, ISP 2023-131, ISP 2023-148, ISP 2023-133, ISP 2023-134, ISP 2023-135, ISP 2023-136, ISP 2023-137, ISP 2023-138, ISP 2023-139, ISP 2023-140, ISP 2023-141, ISP 2023-143, ISP 2023-144, ISP 2023-145, ISP 2023-127, and ISP 2023-147 are adopted for study.

Status Update of Act 974 of 2019 [Exhibit K] [Handout K]

Mary Franklin, Director, Division of County Operations, DHS; Kristi Putnam, Secretary, DHS; and Lori McDonald, Chief of Staff, DHS; gave an update on SNAP work requirements.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.