

STATE OF MONTANA

HEALTH ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**1. Open Meeting**

Chair Frank Garner called the Health Advisory Commission Meeting to order. Representative Frank Garner; Senators Bob Keenan, Carl Glimm, and Mary McNally; Reps Terry Moore, Mary Caferro, and Matt Regier; Director Adam Meier, General Counsel Anita Milanovich, and Charlie Brereton were present.

The Chair called for comments regarding the previous meeting minutes. No comments were provided. Senator Keenan moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes were approved without objection.

**2. Administrative Matters**

Director Foster reminded the commission to fill out their conflict-of-interest forms and expense forms today. Director Foster indicated the commission has been in contact with a public relations firm per HB 632. Director Foster also indicated that issues were discovered with the Montana Veterans' Home, Columbia Falls, and the Eastern Montana Veterans' Home, Glendive, proposals, pertaining to state law. Both will be discussed at the next meeting.

**3. Website, Call Center, and Dashboard Update**

Liane Taylor provided an update on the call center and website. To date there have been 25,000 visits to the website, 10,000 of which have been in the past 30 days. The call center updates the website in real time. No questions were submitted from the commission.

Angie Nelson discussed requirements pertaining to the dashboard transparency portal. Ms. Nelson demonstrated how the public can see where and how funds have been distributed via the state website. Questions were provided by the commission. Ms. Nelson will be the point of contact for this.

**4. ARPA Funding Update**

Director Kurt Alme provided an update on ARPA funding. Director Alme focused on the state fiscal recovery funds which have the broadest discretion. All of the \$17.75 million in funds appropriated for recommendations for nursing home payments and the provider rate study are in the first spending basket. No questions were presented from the commission.

**5. DPHHS Update**

**Update on Actions:** Director Meier highlighted the list of comments and responses.

**HCBS Update:** Director Meier also provided an updated on HCBS under the Medicaid program. The total funding available for initiatives is based on federal matching rates for each activity. Director Meier

recommended using 60% of the available funds to fund HCBS providers. The spending plan has to be approved by HCBS. No questions were provided by the commission.

**Child Care Panel:** Director Meier presented information on the childcare reform. DPHHS is working on applications for childcare providers to apply for assistance. Director Meier invited stakeholders to speak and present data on childcare, childcare deserts, and the impact of childcare on Montana's workforce and economic growth. Questions were provided from the commission to the stakeholders. Director Meier posed the question of how many children were receiving unlicensed care but no reliable way is currently available to provide this measurement. Representative Moore inquired into parent satisfaction with childcare received. Charlie Brereton inquired into appetite for employer sponsored healthcare in Montana. There is interest but logistical challenges are present. Senator McNally requested information on how workforce wages play a factor in recruitment and retention. Senator Keenan requested more information on 0 to 5 Montana.

Break

## **6. Recommendations of Department of Public Health and Human Services**

**Child Care Expanded Block Grant Funds:** Director Meier requested the commission approve \$42,477,481 in supplemental funding to the existing Child Care and Development Block Grant that must be obligated by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and liquidated by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The allocation includes: \$15 million for multi-year community/business innovation and infrastructure solution grants; \$10 million for multi-year targeted child care business specialized training, professional development, and technical support; \$2 million for business process improvements and regulation improvements; \$600,000 pilot limited child care resource and referral provider services in Northeastern/Eastern Montana; \$7 million for child care workforce support; \$5.5 million in temporary child care assistance for certain health care sector employees; and no more than \$2,123,874, or 5% of the total allocation, in administrative costs.

Public comment was provided in person and online.

Senator Keenan made a motion to approve the allocation of \$42,477,481 for expanded child care and development block grant uses including no more than 5% for administrative use; to fund innovative solution grants; to provide targeted business specialized training, professional development and technical support to early childhood small businesses; to implement business process and regulation improvement recommendations; to pilot CCR&R services in Northeastern/Eastern Montana; to provide temporary child care assistance prioritized for certain health care sector employees; and for direct workforce supports for staff in child care facilities.

Representative Caferro made a motion to amend Senator Keenan's motion to include, as one of the things to be measured, an increase in the number of childcare facilities. Director Meier indicated this could be adopted into the original motion. It was adopted without objection.

Representative Caferro made a motion to amend Senator Keenan's motion to further add to recommendation number 1: "or increase slots," as one of the demonstrations, to specifically target those who don't have the capacity to fall into the other recommendations. Director Meier indicated the feedback can be incorporated but the proposals do not go into that level of detail and would not fit this recommendation. Representative Caferro removed her motion.

Representative Caferro made a motion to amend the motion to include a general provider rate increase. Director Meier rejected the proposal because other programs were in place that could provide the same service. The Chair called for a roll call vote on the modification to the motion. The modification to the motion failed by an 8-2 vote.

Chair Garner called for a roll call vote on Senator Keenan's original motion. The motion passed 7-3.

Break for Lunch

**Pandemic Emergency Assistance Funding:** Director Meier requested the commission approve \$2,733,901 in funding for Pandemic Emergency Assistance Funding to needy families impacted by Covid-19. PEAFF funds may provide certain non-recurrent short-term benefits not to exceed four months. The Department has until September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022, to expend the funds. Up to 15% of the allocation may be used to administer the use of funds. SNAP households with minor children where DPHHS can verify an individual has become gainfully employed or increased employment for a minimum of twelve weeks will be eligible to receive funds.

No public comment was provided.

Senator Keenan made a motion to approve the allocation of \$2,733,901 in Pandemic Emergency Assistance Funds to provide one-time payments to individuals in SNAP households with minor children who have become gainfully employed or increased their employment for a period of at least twelve complete weeks.

The Chair called for a roll call vote on Senator Keenan's motion. The motion passed 8-2.

**Detection and Mitigation of Covid-19 in Confinement Facilities Funding:** Director Meier requested the commission approve \$2,450,000 in supplemental funding through existing Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity cooperative agreements to respond to Covid-19 in confinement facilities. Confinement facilities include adult prisons and jails, juvenile confinement facilities, police lockups, and other community confinement facilities.

No public comment was provided.

Senator Keena made a motion to approve the allocation of \$2,450,000 to DPHHS to provide support, equipment, resources, and supplies to confinement facilities for the detection and mitigation of Covid-19.

The Chair called for a voice vote. The vote passed unanimously.

**Provider Rate Study Funding:** Director Meier requested the commission approve up to \$2.75 million for a provider rate study to examine the impact of Covid-19 on providers and make recommendations to adjust rates to reflect impacts in an effort to maintain services. The provider rate study RFP has been posted, responses received, and is in the final stages of evaluation, review, and approval.

No public comment was provided.

Director Meier moved to accept the recommendation. The Chair called for a roll call vote. The motion passed 9-1.

**Nursing Home Block Grant Proposal:** Director Meier requested the commission approve up to \$15 million to be distributed to nursing homes and hospital-based swing beds, pursuant to HB 632. The allocation will be made based on the number of Medicaid patient days each facility had from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. The funds were issued immediately after they became available.

No public comment was provided.

Senator Keenan made a motion to accept the recommendation to allocate to the Department of Public Health and Human Services up to \$15 million for nursing home and hospital-based swing bed payments pursuant to HB 632. The Chair called for a voice vote. The motion passed unanimously.

## **7. Public Comment**

The Chair opened up the floor for general public comment to the commission. Public comments were provided in person and online.

## **8. Deadlines and Future Meeting Dates**

Director Foster discussed deadlines and upcoming meeting dates. Director Foster discussed issues that may not be able to be resolved which could be addressed on an as-needed basis for future meetings and that deadlines have been handled. The next meeting will address the funding for nursing homes for veterans, potentially on the interim budget committee meeting on September 14<sup>th</sup>. If these proposals cannot be resolved at that point then another date will be looked at on an as-needed basis. The Chair requested information from the department about how we're receiving information on reporting from the work of the commission.

The Chair opened up comments from the commission. Representative Caferro requested information regarding how the every-day Montanan will learn about these opportunities and what the plan is to get the word out about them.

Adjourned at 2:30pm.