

Today's CFAC committee was held to discuss three proposals from the Department of Health and Welfare.

Chairman Adams called the meeting to order at 3:01pm. All committee members were present except for Tom Kealey, John Evans, and Representative Youngblood.

First, Lisa Hettinger presented a requested for \$700,000 for Idaho behavioral health initiatives to help with mental health needs during the pandemic. Ross Edmunds of the Division of Behavior Health detailed the proposal in three parts: community hospitalization to help with the costs of delayed admissions to hospitals, recovery centers to assist them with the work they do with addiction and substance abuse, and psychiatric triage centers to help divert patients away from emergency rooms who are having mental health crises. Edmunds confirmed this would not cover the state share of Medicaid expenses. Representative Wintrow made a motion to support this motion in full plus an extra \$200,000 to support crisis centers throughout Idaho that have been affected by the pandemic. Dennis Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed 11-1 with Lt. Governor McGeachin voting nay and Joshua Whitworth abstaining.

Second, Lisa Hettinger presented a \$5.23 million proposal to help assist in covering COVID-19 related expenses at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare that would otherwise have to be picked up on the General Fund. Hettinger stated that approximately one-third of the Departments staff has diverted their time in some capacity to fight the pandemic and they have been tracking these hours outside of their normal work assignments. Chairman Adams asked and Hettinger confirmed that this proposal would free up General Fund from the Department to give back to the state. Shawn Keough moved to accept the proposal as presented, seconded by Matt Newton. The motion passed 12-1 with Lt. Governor McGeachin voting nay.

Last, Lisa Hettinger presented a proposal for \$38 million that would help Medicaid providers around Idaho, without which Medicaid patients may experience issues with access to care. Matt Wimer, Administrator of Medicaid in the Department of Health and Welfare detailed the request stating that it targets small business medical providers to give them financial relief to cover expenses and loss of revenue due COVID-19. Many of these businesses who located in rural Idaho rely largely on Medicaid dollars for their revenue stream and have seen up to a 40% decrease during the pandemic. Wimmer confirmed that these dollars will not be used to pay for a Medicaid match with the federal government, only for aiding medical providers. Fred Birnbaum commented as a member of the public that he did not believe we should be growing the Medicaid system with this request. Lydia Dawson commented that her network of providers are all struggling and do not have the reserve funds to keep functioning into the winter months. Senator Bair made a motion to accept the proposal in full, seconded by Bobbie-Jo Meuleman. The motion passed 12-1 with Lt. Governor McGeachin voting nay.

Chairman Adams concluded the committee stating that the committee intended to meet next Friday on another set of proposals.