

MEDICAID SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING – DEC. 11, 2006

Present:

Rod Barton, committee chairman and WHCC commissioner; Lorraine Saulino-Klein, WHCC commissioner; Barbara Cohee, WHCC commissioner; John Vandel, WHCC commissioner; Greg Gruman, committee member

Guests: Sen. Charles Scott, Chairman, Senate Labor, Health and Social Services Committee, Mary Behrens, Chris Sullivan, APS

Staff: Susan Anderson

Long term care bill

Chairman Rod Barton led a discussion of the long term care bill passed by the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Committee. He said that WHCC proposals for a ready response capability, expansion of the assisted living and home care waivers, Project Out enhancement and Hospice education were approved.

Discussion on the adult foster care provisions in the bill not specifically recommended by the WHCC covered such topics as how foster care would work in rural areas and the idea that by approving 10 pilot projects the legislature can learn how the program works.

Another part of the bill that was not in the WHCC recommendations was a recommendation that nursing homes adopt a private room standard.

A review of the Nurse Practice Act is addressed in a number of bills, according to Sen. Scott. Lorraine Saulino-Klein described concerns that nurses have about medication aides.

Rod told the committee that for the most part the WHCC recommendations were incorporated into the Labor, Health committee bill and were being carried forward.

Further education for Legislature

The committee discussed how to offer education to the Legislature on the long term care recommendations. Among the suggestions was having the commission report to a meeting of the Joint Labor, Health committee during the first week that the Legislature is in session in 2007.

The committee discussed finding how Wyoming's percentage of people in nursing homes compares to national averages.

And Rod Barton asked Medicaid Director Greg Gruman to bring an illustration (a pie chart) of the breakdown of Medicaid spending to the next committee meeting, not only dollars but numbers of participants.

Future areas for committee work

Rod Barton reported that many of the just-released National Medicaid Study Group recommendations were similar to the WHCC ideas. One item that the WHCC did not include in the group of recommendations was encouraging individuals to buy long term care insurance, and offering incentives to businesses that assist employees in buying such insurance. Suggestions from the national study include:

1. Incentives to individuals for buying long term care insurance

2. Provide incentives to employers to offer long term care insurance as an employee benefit.
3. Use home equity to finance long term care
4. Long term care awareness campaign to increase state participation
5. Study of policy options for using alternative insurance models

The committee will work more on the issue of long term care insurance, studying if there is a way to look at Wyoming incentives to encourage people to buy long term care insurance.

Waiver applications

Greg Gruman, director of the Wyoming Medicaid program, described applications he has made for “transformation grants” that will offer creative ways of offering a variety of Medicaid services.