



CHILDREN, FAMILIES, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INTERIM COMMITTEE

69th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

John Esp
Dennis Lenz
Cora Neumann
Mike Yakawich

HOUSE MEMBERS

Melody Cunningham
Jodee Etchart
SJ Howell
George Nikolakakos
Melissa Nikolakakos
Jolanda Songer

COMMITTEE STAFF

Milly Allen - Lead Staff
Maddie Krezowski - Legal Staff
Emily McKay - Legal Staff
Jolanda Songer - Secretary

MINUTES LOG

September 23, 2025
Capitol Room 137 & Zoom
Helena, Montana

Please note: This document is a Minutes Log and provides annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of the meeting and the time at which the item was presented or discussed, a motion was made, or a vote was taken. The narrative presented here is provided only as a guide to the audio or video recording of the meeting. The official discussion, motion, or vote is available on the audio or video archive of this meeting. The Legislature does not prepare a transcript of the meeting activities. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio or video recording of this meeting.

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MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Jodee Etchart, Presiding Officer (R)
Rep. SJ Howell, Vice Presiding Officer (D)
Rep. Melody Cunningham (D)
Sen. John Esp (R)
Sen. Dennis Lenz (R)
Rep. George Nikolakakos (R) – Via Zoom
Sen. Mike Yakawich (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Sen. Cora Neumann (D)
Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos (R)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Milly Allen, Lead Staff
Maddie Krezowski, Legal Staff
Emily McKay, Legal Staff
Jolanda Songer, Secretary

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

VISITORS' LIST ([Attachment 2](#))

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

08:58:45 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart called the meeting to order at 8:58 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

09:00:11 Sen. Dennis Lenz

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 13: CURRENT CAPABILITIES, FUTURE DEMAND, AND RISKS OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) IN MONTANA

09:01:14 Shari Graham, EMS System Manager, Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)

[EXHIBIT 1](#)

[EXHIBIT 2](#)

Committee Discussion and Questions

09:12:07 Sen. Dennis Lenz

09:12:16 Shari Graham, DPHHS

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 13: CURRENT CAPABILITIES, FUTURE DEMAND, AND RISKS OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) IN MONTANA - Continued

09:12:35 Shari Graham
(See Exhibit 1)

Public Comment on Presentation

09:25:35 Joe Mery

09:30:04 Tim Montana

09:34:35 Barbara Mutter, Three Forks Area Ambulance

09:43:18 Leslie McBirnie, Manager, Madison Valley Ambulance Service, Ennis

09:44:54 Caitlin Nichols

09:46:10 Don Whalen, Manager, Missoula Emergency Services and President, Montana Ambulance Association

09:47:27 Danielle Montana

09:51:07 Nathaniel Cook, Manager, Fort Harrison VA Ambulance Program

09:54:45 Allen Mary Coates

10:00:10 Amanda Frickle, Montana American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)

10:02:13 Terry Ross, Jefferson Valley EMS, Whitehall

10:07:00 Sara Monroe

10:10:50 Michael Byk

10:12:33 Michael Kremkau, Chair, EMS Advisory Committee

10:15:57 Brodie Verworn, Owner and President, Vitalogy EMS, Kalispell

Committee Discussion and Questions

10:17:38 Sen. John Esp
10:18:12 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell
10:18:56 Shari Graham
10:20:42 Sen. John Esp
10:20:57 Sen. Mike Yakawich

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Today's Themes

10:24:48 Charlie Brereton, Director, Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)
[EXHIBIT 3](#)
[EXHIBIT 4](#)

Federal Action and Departmental Impacts

10:27:35 Kim Aiken, Deputy Director, DPHHS
(See Exhibit 4)
10:42:26 Dir. Charlie Brereton, DPHHS

Help 1115 Demonstration Waiver

10:42:55 Rebecca de Camara, Executive Director, Medicaid and Health Services, DPHHS
(See Exhibit 4)
10:43:20 Jessie Counts, Human Services Executive Director, DPHHS
10:43:42 Rebecca de Camara, DPHHS
(See Exhibit 4)

Anticipated Stakeholder Impacts and Agency Impacts and Implementation

11:06:16 Jessie Counts, DPHHS
(See Exhibit 4)

Committee Discussion and Questions

11:20:59 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell
11:21:54 Rebecca de Camara
11:22:58 Dir. Charlie Brereton
11:23:53 Rep. Melody Cunningham
11:25:08 Dir. Charlie Brereton
11:27:21 Rep. Melody Cunningham
11:27:49 Jessie Counts
11:30:47 Sen. Dennis Lenz
[EXHIBIT 5](#)
11:31:33 Dir. Charlie Brereton
11:32:24 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
11:32:36 Dir. Charlie Brereton

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES - Continued

SNAP Payment Error Rate

11:34:05 Jessie Counts
(See Exhibit 4)
11:38:49 Dir. Charlie Brereton

Rural Health Transformation Program

11:39:21 Rebecca de Camara
(See Exhibit 4)

Committee Discussion and Questions

11:47:16 Sen. John Esp
11:48:15 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell
11:48:38 Rebecca de Camara
11:49:08 Sen. Dennis Lenz
11:49:31 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
11:49:40 Dir. Charlie Brereton

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES - Continued

Montana State Hospital

11:50:05 Dr. Douglas Harrington, State Medical Officer, DPHHS
(See Exhibit 4)
11:57:20 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

Eastern Montana Behavioral Health Facility

11:57:29 Dir. Charlie Brereton
[EXHIBIT 6](#)

Committee Discussion and Questions

12:03:48 Sen. Mike Yakawich
[EXHIBIT 7](#)
[EXHIBIT 8](#)
12:06:34 Dir. Charlie Brereton
12:09:31 Sen. Dennis Lenz
[EXHIBIT 9](#)
12:09:56 Dir. Charlie Brereton
12:10:02 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
(See Exhibit 5)
[EXHIBIT 10](#)
[EXHIBIT 11](#)
12:10:20 Sen. John Esp
(See Exhibit 5)

12:10:58 Jon Forte, Riverstone
(See Exhibit 5)

12:14:13 Dir. Charlie Brereton

12:15:07 **Recessed**

13:20:24 **Reconvened**

Public Comment on Department Presentation

13:20:52 Chad Phillips

13:24:06 Amanda Cahill, Confluence Public Health Alliance

13:26:39 Shyla Patera

13:31:03 Travis Hoffman, Policy Director, Summit Independent Living, Missoula

13:33:26 Michele Hirsch, Valley County

Committee Discussion and Questions

13:35:28 Sen. John Esp

13:36:12 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

House Joint Resolution 26: OVERVIEW OF GUARDIANSHIP AND CONSERATORSHIP ISSUES IN MONTANA

13:37:11 Beth Russo, Government Affairs Director, American Association of Retired
Persons (AARP)

[EXHIBIT 12](#)

13:50:06 Molly Considine, Attorney in Billings & Member and Past President of the
Business, Estates, Trusts, Tax, and Real Property Section of Montana State Bar
(BETTR)

EXHIBIT 13 Add when available

14:14:31 Denise Calabrese, Executive Director, Center for Guardianship Certification
(CGC)

EXHIBIT 14 Add when available

Committee Discussion and Questions

14:27:53 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

14:28:38 Beth Russo, AARP

14:31:03 Sen. Mike Yakawich

14:32:00 Molly Considine, BETTR

Public Comment on Panel

14:35:24 Dawn Larimer, Personal Financial Care, LLC, Billings

14:38:10 Erin Marcus, Providence St. Patrick Hospital, Missoula

14:41:14 Autumn Holm, Care Management Program Manager, Missoula Aging Services

14:43:59 Patrick Kelley, Director of State Affairs, Alzheimer's Association

14:46:28 Kristin Page-Nei, AARP Montana

14:48:20 Matt Kuntz, Executive Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness for Montana
14:49:34 Mike Lahr, Attorney, Disability Rights Montana
14:53:11 Cassie Wick, Ability Montana

Committee Discussion and Questions

14:54:30 Sen. Mike Yakawich
14:55:13 Beth Russo, AARP
14:57:43 Sen. John Esp
14:58:17 Molly Considine
14:59:25 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell
15:01:51 Molly Considine
15:01:50 Rep. Melody Cunningham
15:02:21 Denise Calabrese, CGC

15:04:23 **Recessed**

15:16:22 **Reconvened**

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY TOPICS IN THE COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION

15:16:53 Matt Kuntz, Executive Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness Montana
15:19:01 Rand Dickson, Powell Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Deer Lodge & Chief
Executive Officer, Interstate Medical Transport & President, Montana EMS
Association
15:21:14 JD Olsen, Business Agent, Teamsters Union Local 2, Butte
15:23:13 Grace Williams, Fire Chief, Jefferson City Fire Department
15:26:00 Rick Hutchinson
15:27:34 Derek Hitt, Teamsters Local 2

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW

Introduction of New Legal Staff

15:28:41 Maddie Krezowski, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
15:29:05 Emily McKay, Legal Staff, LSD

Administrative Rule Review

15:29:13 Maddie Krezowski, LSD
[EXHIBIT 15](#)

Public Comment on Administrative Rule Review

15:32:33 None

Committee Discussion and Questions

15:32:58 None

COMMITTEE WORK SESSION

15:33:01 Milly Allen, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

15:33:09 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
15:33:18 Milly Allen, LSD
[EXHIBIT 16](#)
15:36:04 Sen. Mike Yakawich
15:36:24 Milly Allen
15:36:53 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell
15:38:54 Sen. Dennis Lenz
15:39:31 Sen. Mike Yakawich
15:39:39 Rep. Melody Cunningham
15:40:39 Sen. John Esp

Motion

15:41:45 Rep. John Esp moved to change guardianship to 0.25 and EMS to 0.15 and leave the rest of the plan as is.

Discussion on the Motion

15:42:01 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

Vote

15:42:49 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Committee Discussion and Questions

15:43:16 Sen. Dennis Lenz
15:44:32 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell
15:46:13 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
15:46:28 Milly Allen
15:46:53 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
15:47:01 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell
15:47:25 Sen. John Esp
(See Exhibit 12)
15:48:15 Rep. Melody Cunningham

Motion

15:49:06 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart moved to adopt the work plan.

Vote

15:49:15 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

COMMITTEE WORK SESSION - Continued

15:49:36 Milly Allen

Committee Discussion and Questions

15:50:10 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell
15:52:08 Sen. Dennis Lenz

15:52:53 Sen. Mike Yakawich
15:55:28 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
15:55:34 Mike Yakawich
15:56:31 Milly Allen
15:57:16 Rep. Melody Cunningham
15:59:04 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
15:59:11 Rep. Melody Cunningham

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 15:59:34