



Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee

PO BOX 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706
(406) 444-3064
FAX (406) 444-3036

60th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

CAROL JUNEAU
RICK LAIBLE
TERRY MURPHY
DAN WEINBERG

HOUSE MEMBERS

EDITH CLARK
ERNIE DUTTON
TERESA HENRY
DIANE SANDS

COMMITTEE STAFF

SUE O'CONNELL, Lead Staff
LISA JACKSON, Staff Attorney
FONG HOM, Secretary
PAT MURDO, Staff for SJR 15

For immediate release: March 7, 2008

Contact: Sue O'Connell, Legislative Research Analyst, 406-444-3597
or Gayle Shirley, Legislative Information Officer, 406-444-2957

Lawmakers to Consider Hospital-Related Legislation

Lawmakers will consider draft legislation aimed at clarifying the relationship between hospitals and health-care providers at a set of meetings March 17-18 in Helena. Emergency medical services and mental health issues also are on the agenda.

The Children, Families, Health and Human Services Interim Committee of the Montana Legislature is looking at how hospitals determine which doctors have hospital privileges and what happens when conflicts of interest exist among health-care providers. The issues were raised as part of a study authorized by the 2007 Legislature with passage of Senate Joint Resolution 15.

A subcommittee assigned to the SJR 15 study will meet at 8 a.m. March 17 in Room 137 to review and revise draft legislation involving so-called "economic credentialing." That term refers to a hospital denying privileges to a doctor who may have an investment interest in a competing health-care facility, such as an ambulatory surgical center or an imaging center.

The subcommittee also is considering a bill draft that defines specialty hospitals beyond an existing law that already identifies cardiac, orthopedic, or surgical cases as the primary function of a specialty hospital. Montana currently has no specialty hospitals.

The full committee will meet at 1 p.m. March 17 in Room 137 of the State Capitol and will continue its work through March 18.

In addition to reviewing the subcommittee's legislative recommendations, the full committee also will continue its study of emergency medical services and will hear from a consulting firm hired to conduct a study of Montana's publicly funded mental health system.

DMA Health Strategies representatives will discuss their plan for the mental health study and will review with the committee the questions they will ask Montanans to identify gaps in services and analyze potential funding sources for the system.

Committee members are Sens. Carol Juneau, D-Browning; Rick Laible, R-Darby; Terry Murphy, R-Cardwell; and Dan Weinberg, D-Whitefish; and Reps. Edith Clark, R-Sweetgrass; Ernie Dutton, R-Billings; and Teresa Henry and Diane Sands, both Missoula Democrats. Sen. Weinberg and Rep. Dutton make up the subcommittee.

For agendas and other meeting materials, visit www.leg.mt.gov.