

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS & REVENUE

Budget Review Subcommittee on Human Resources

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the 2021 Interim

October 6, 2021

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 5th meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations & Revenue was held on Wednesday, October 6, 2021, at 11:00 AM, in Room 129 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Danny Bentley, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Stephen Meredith, Co-Chair; Representative Danny Bentley, Co-Chair; Senators Julie Raque Adams, Ralph Alvarado, Karen Berg, and Danny Carroll; Representatives Adam Bowling, Deanna Frazier, Melinda Gibbons Prunty, Steve Sheldon, Russell Webber, Susan Westrom, and Lisa Willner.

Guests: Michelle Rose, Manager of Population Health, Norton Infectious Diseases Institute, Norton Healthcare; Danielle Revert, Nurse Practitioner, The Hepatitis C Treatment Center; Dr. John Jones, Medical Director, Primary Care Centers of Eastern Kentucky; Adam Mather, Inspector General, Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS); Dr. Connie White, Deputy Commissioner for Clinical Services, Department for Public Health, CHFS; Dr. Russell Travis, Travis Neurological Consulting; and Van Ingram, Executive Director, Office of Drug Control Policy, Justice and Public Safety Cabinet.

LRC Staff: Miriam Fordham, Kevin Newton, and Benjamin Thompson

Approval of Minutes

Senator Meredith made the motion to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2021, meeting of the subcommittee. Senator Alvarado seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved without objection.

Funding for Hepatitis C Treatment and Services for Individuals with Substance Use Disorder

Ms. Rose, Ms. Revert, and Dr. Jones each provided a presentation on the importance of testing and early treatment of Hepatitis C, as well as the additional health problems Hepatitis C can cause if left untreated.

In response to a question from Representative Frazier, Ms. Rose stated that a modeling study estimated that roughly forty four thousand people may be Hepatitis C positive in Kentucky. Ms. Revert noted that Hepatitis C populations are generally hard to accurately assess.

In response to questions from Senator Berg, Ms. Revert confirmed that someone cured of Hepatitis C could become reinfected, as humans do not develop immunity to Hepatitis C. Ms. Revert noted that the cost of Hepatitis C treatment has dropped roughly seventy eight percent in the last few years.

In response to a question from Senator Alvarado, Ms. Rose stated that women typically are introduced to intravenous drug use through their partners. Ms. Rose noted that those in the zero to nine year age range with a dual diagnosis of Hepatitis C and opioid dependency are infants born with neonatal abstinence syndrome.

In response to a question from Representative Webber, Ms. Revert said that there would be high human and financial costs if Kentucky doesn't get more aggressive in combating Hepatitis C.

In response to a question from Senator Berg, Ms. Rose noted that the cost of Hepatitis C screening varies, but that the average is roughly sixty four dollars per test.

Update on Funding for the Kentucky All Schedule Prescription Electronic Reporting (KASPER) System and Request for Proposal Process

Mr. Mather, Dr. White, Dr. Travis, and Mr. Ingram provided information regarding the funding for and necessity of the KASPER system.

In response to questions from Senator Berg, Dr. Travis confirmed that KASPER can be used to identify over prescribers. Dr. Travis noted that the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure has six investigators who work to investigate suspected over prescribers. Dr. Travis noted that the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure has no oversight of nurse practitioners.

In response to questions from Senator Meredith, Mr. Mather noted that the Cabinet for Health and Family Services cannot speak on requests for proposal that are still in the negotiation phase.

In response to a question from Senator Adams, Mr. Mather noted that the dispensing pharmacist enters the data into KASPER. Dr. Travis stated that prescribing doctors have to report to KASPER within twenty-four hours of prescribing.

In response to a question from Chair Bentley, Mr. Mather noted that Kentucky is one of only five total states that maintain their own prescription drug reporting system. Mr. Mather noted that other states pay an outside vendor for the same service.

In response to a question from Representative Sheldon, Mr. Mather noted that there have been roughly one thousand requests from providers to waive the requirement that opioid prescriptions be submitted electronically.

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at 12:32 PM.