



AARP Montana Legislative Priority **SB 44: The Creation of a Health Policy Council**

An interim committee solely dedicated to health policy will give legislators the resources to focus on solutions for improving health care

- Currently, the Montana Legislature addresses problems of healthcare reform in seven different standing and interim committees. Expansion of coverage, methods of delivery, and regulation of insurance are all covered by separate lawmakers and staff, leaving them with an understandably partial picture and little time to deal with the complex issues of health policy.

Workgroups combine the public, industry stakeholders and legislators to make the Health Policy Council highly participatory

- The Health Policy Council calls for the creation of workgroups in order to facilitate communication between the public, stakeholders, and legislators. With legislators encouraged to attend workgroup meetings and the Council accepting recommendations from the workgroups, they will be a powerful tool for healthcare reform.

Healthcare reform, and the Health Policy Council, is non-partisan

- Healthcare reform is not a partisan issue. To reflect that, the Health Policy Council will always consist of equal members from each party.

Healthcare reform is on the national horizon, a Health Policy Council is necessary for Montana to keep up.

- Healthcare policy at the national level is preparing to change dramatically. In order to be able to cope with federal initiatives, take advantage of future funding, and address Montana's individual need, we need dedicated staff and attention. Montana can be a leader in healthcare reform: as states lead the national governments follow. CHIP is a good example.

The model behind the Health Policy Council is proven to be effective in other states, and has been modified to be even better.

- Legislatively derived healthcare policy councils and commissions have been effectively implemented in many states. We have learned from their experiences, and the incorporation of stakeholders, legislators, and the public expands on the work of Wyoming, Washington, Maine, Pennsylvania and many other states, taking the best parts of their proposals.