

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 63

INTRODUCED BY J. HAMILTON

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A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF ACCESS TO AND BEST PRACTICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 67TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in 2019 that suicide has replaced car accidents as the leading cause of death by injury in the United States, suggesting that suicide has risen from a public health concern to a public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, Montana has, for the past 30 years, been among the five states with the highest suicide rates; and

WHEREAS, the organization Mental Health America in 2018 ranked Montana 29th among the states in terms of the access that residents have to mental health services; and

WHEREAS, changes in case management services have disrupted the emergency response to Montanans experiencing mental health crises; and

WHEREAS, the local advisory councils created as a part of the public mental health system would benefit from additional communication with the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to examine access to and best practices for mental health services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study:

- (1) examine the availability of inpatient care for people experiencing a mental health emergency;
- (2) examine the availability of diversion options within the mental health system and any barriers to greater use of alternatives to involuntary commitments to the Montana state hospital;
- (3) evaluate current laws and practices related to involuntary commitment and to short-term crisis intervention and diversion alternatives;



1 (4) review innovative programs for emergency response to mental health crises that are being used in
2 Montana and other states;

3 (5) review the use of telemedicine for mental health services and any barriers to wider use of
4 telemedicine for those services;

5 (6) consider the current and desired balance between community and institutional services; and

6 (7) review the current law, administrative rules, and policies on the use of involuntary medication for
7 treatment of mental illness and any barriers to the use of involuntary medication as a means of stabilizing an
8 individual and resolving mental health conditions that may place the individual at risk for involuntary commitment.

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee seek input from representatives of the Department of
10 Public Health and Human Services, local advisory councils, service area authorities, the Montana Health
11 Oversight Committee, providers of mental health services, the Montana County Attorneys Association, local law
12 enforcement agencies, organizations that advocate on behalf of people with mental illness, and individuals living
13 with mental illness.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
15 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2020.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
17 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 67th Legislature.

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