



Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee

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61st Montana Legislature

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For immediate release

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Committee to Look at Health Care Reform, Medical Marijuana

A legislative committee will meet April 26-27 to learn how health care legislation passed this year by Congress may affect Montanans.

Members also will hear several presentations about emerging issues related to the Montana Medical Marijuana Act, which voters approved in November 2004.

The Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee will meet beginning at 9:30 a.m. on April 26 and 8 a.m. April 27 in Room 137 of the State Capitol. The public is welcome to attend and will have a chance to comment on the work of the committee. Comments on the medical marijuana law also will be accepted in advance of the meeting at mmcomment@mt.gov.

Also during the meeting, the committee will receive an initial report on a study of community services for people with developmental disabilities and mental illness. The 2009 Legislature requested the study with enactment of House Joint Resolution 39. The public will have a chance to comment on the report before the committee decides whether to pursue any further activities related to the study during the next several months.

As part of the committee's ongoing study of health care under Senate Joint Resolution 35, members will receive reports or hear presentations on:

- provisions of the federal health care legislation that will take effect this year or will require state action within the next year, including requirements for a high-risk insurance pool, tax credits for small businesses, and some changes to insurance company practices;
- childhood health issues, particularly school-related efforts to encourage children to lead healthier lifestyles;
- costs related to the practice of "defensive" medicine;
- information about medical malpractice insurance costs and claims in Montana; and
- recent efforts by the Montana Healthcare Forum, a network of stakeholders interested in health care policy issues.

The committee will hear on April 27 from a number of speakers about issues related to the Montana Medical Marijuana Act.

In recent months, the law has raised a number of questions across the state, primarily because of an increase in the number of patients registered in the state medical marijuana program. Panel presentations will focus on issues related to state, local, and school governments, law enforcement, and the medical marijuana industry.

The committee plans to allow a half hour during its meeting for public comment on the issue. It also is accepting written comments from people who can't attend. These may be submitted to mmcomment@mt.gov or to Sue O'Connell, Legislative Services Division, P.O. Box 201706, Helena, MT 59624.

The meeting will be broadcast over the legislative Web site at www.leg.mt.gov. It also will air on the state public access television network TVMT. For a list of TVMT channels, visit www.leg.mt.gov/tvmt.