

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14

2 INTRODUCED BY W. SALES

3
4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
5 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF MONTANA'S PUBLICLY FUNDED MENTAL HEALTH
6 SYSTEM; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 68TH
7 LEGISLATURE.

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9 WHEREAS, Montana's publicly funded mental health system experienced system-altering cutbacks
10 when state revenues came in below anticipated levels in fiscal years 2017 and 2018; and

11 WHEREAS, the availability of community mental health crisis beds HAS changed ~~with the revenue~~
12 ~~cutbacks~~; and

13 WHEREAS, PEOPLE EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS FREQUENTLY COME INTO CONTACT WITH LAW
14 ENFORCEMENT, THE JUSTICE SYSTEM, AND THE FACILITIES OPERATED BY THE MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC
15 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES; AND

16 WHEREAS, ALL STAKEHOLDERS HAVE A STRONG INTEREST IN DIVERTING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND
17 SUBSTANCE ABUSE CONDITIONS FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM; AND

18 WHEREAS, military veterans in Montana are often treated in Montana's system of mental health crisis
19 care before being transferred to appropriate Veterans Affairs facilities for treatment; and

20 WHEREAS, the expansion of the Medicaid program to cover adults without dependent children with an
21 income at or below 138% of the federal poverty level has provided more than 90,000 Montanans with coverage
22 of mental health and substance use treatment services; and

23 WHEREAS, community health clinics have been providing an increased amount of behavioral health
24 care to treat not only mental health disorders but also substance use disorders; and

25 WHEREAS, the use of telehealth for mental health services has increased dramatically during the
26 COVID-19 public health emergency; and

27 WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature has continued to make changes to the mental health system by
28 adding peer support as a Medicaid-covered service, establishing a pilot project for mobile crisis response, and

1 revising statutes related to community treatment facilities; and

2 WHEREAS, the ~~state~~ FEDERAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION has
 3 recently ~~approved certified behavioral health centers that will alter the funding methodologies for some~~
 4 ~~behavioral health services~~ AWARDED GRANTS FOR CERTIFIED COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINICS IN MONTANA
 5 AND IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT THE LONG-TERM FUNDING IMPLICATIONS OF THAT MODEL WILL BE; and

6 WHEREAS, the rapid pace and dramatic nature of changes in Montana's publicly funded mental health
 7 system in recent years warrant a close examination of the system by Montana policymakers.

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

11 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
 12 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to undertake a comprehensive review of the elements of
 13 Montana's publicly funded mental health system to determine:

14 (1) how the system has changed, including how funding reductions in recent years have affected
 15 services;

16 (2) whether and where gaps exist in the system;

17 (3) HOW THE SYSTEM DIVERTS PEOPLE FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM;

18 (4) THE ADEQUACY OF THE STATE'S SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO APPROPRIATELY TRAIN AND EDUCATE
 19 CLINICIANS NECESSARY TO MEET THE BEHAVIORAL NEEDS OF MONTANANS; and

20 ~~(3)(5)~~ whether the Legislature or the executive branch should address any gaps in services.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study include input from appropriate stakeholders, including but
 22 not limited to representatives of the Department of Public Health and Human Services, THE DEPARTMENT OF
 23 CORRECTIONS, the Department of Military Affairs, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, HOSPITALS,
 24 community mental health centers, federally qualified community health centers, individual mental health
 25 providers, SHERIFFS, COUNTY ATTORNEYS, HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANIES, CLINICAL PROVIDER ASSOCIATIONS, and
 26 organizations that advocate for people with mental illness and substance use disorders.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
 28 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2022.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
2 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 68th Legislature.

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