



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES RELATED TO SERVICES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS AND PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES; AND REQUIRING THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY TO BE REPORTED TO THE 67TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, programs in the Senior and Long-Term Care Division of the Department of Public Health and Human Services have undergone changes, including program cuts and changes to policy and policy interpretation, that have affected services and Montanans in the last several years; and

WHEREAS, some of the funding appropriated for the division in recent years has been diverted for other purposes within the department or reverted to the general fund despite the existence of waiting lists for services; and

WHEREAS, it is important for the Legislature to understand the services provided by the division, the factors related to the waiting lists for those services, and the policies and barriers to effectively and efficiently serving individuals on waiting lists and others who use senior and long-term care 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 study matters related to the Senior and Long-Term Care Division of the Department of Public Health and Human Services, including:

(1) access to services under the Community First Choice Program, the Personal Assistance Services Program, and the Big Sky Waiver for the elderly and people with physical disabilities, including the availability of both basic and adult residential waiver slots;

(2) barriers that prevent individuals from accessing services and that prevent the division from fully using appropriated funding in the Big Sky Waiver, including but not limited to workforce issues and Medicaid reimbursement rates;

(3) recent changes to the division's policies and interpretations of policy and how the changes have affected the level of services provided to people served by or eligible for the Community First Choice Program, the Personal Assistance Services Program, and the Big Sky Waiver;

(4) the manner in which waiver slots are created and filled, including the process used to maintain the waiting list for the Big Sky Waiver and select people for services when openings occur;

(5) the status of cuts that were made in services as a result of budget issues in the 2019 biennium and the manner in which funds restored because of budget triggers were used by the department for services provided by the division;

(6) access to aging services programs for seniors of all ages; and

(7) other matters related to senior and long-term care services as determined appropriate to the study.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study include representatives of the Department of Public Health and Human Services, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, organizations representing individuals who receive services provided through the waiver or the division, and individuals and family members affected by department policies involving services for the elderly and the physically disabled.

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

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

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