

CONTINUUM OF LONG-TERM CARE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERIM COMMITTEE
MILLY ALLEN - MAY 2024

BACKGROUND

House Joint Resolution 28, sponsored by Rep. Michael Yakawich in 2023, requested an interim study of the continuum of long-term and senior care in Montana. The bill passed the House Human Services Committee unanimously. After it passed its third reading in the House, it was concurred in unanimously by the Senate State Administration Committee; however, HJ 28 did not make it to the Senate floor before *sine die*. The Children, Families, Health, & Human Services Interim Committee decided study this issue during the 2023-2024 interim session, with a focus on aging in place.

STUDY PROCESS

PRESENTATIONS

At its September meeting, Joshua Poulette with the Legislative Fiscal Division provided the committee with a [demographics report](#) for the state, focusing on the age of Montana's population. Projections indicate the working population will continue to shrink, while the retirement-age population will increase in every county; however rural counties are expected to experience a larger increase in the retirement age population than urban ones.

The committee engaged in a dementia simulation in November. In March, the committee received a [nursing workforce update](#) from the Department of Labor and Industry. In 2022, 18% of Montana's actively licensed registered nurses were 50-59 years of age, and 22% were 60 years of age or older. Occupational projections from DLI predict that home health and personal care aides, nursing assistants, and licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses will be among the health care professions with the most openings in 2022-2032.

DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

The Department of Public Health and Human Services provided [an overview](#) of its Senior and Long-Term Care Division, which provides several services that help Montanans age in place such as personal assistance services, Community First Choice, Big Sky Waiver, and home health services. It also responded in writing to questions from the committee on [background checks](#) for employees of long term care agencies, as well as [Area Agencies on Aging, presumptive eligibility, "no wrong door," and other issues](#).

PROVISIONAL DRAFT LEGISLATION

Rep. Yakawich proposed three pieces of committee legislation at the March 14, 2024 meeting: a "no wrong door" system to provide navigational services to the aged and persons with disabilities, presumptive Medicare eligibility for home and community-based services, and supports for unpaid caregivers. The committee considered first drafts of all three proposals at its May 9 meeting, requesting second drafts of the "no wrong door" and presumptive eligibility legislation for review at the July meeting.

The committee has not voted to adopt any drafts as committee legislation; all three proposals remain in provisional draft status.