

MINUTES
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE AND LABOR

Meeting Jointly
Tuesday, September 1, 2026
1:00 PM
Room A, MAC
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Missy Irvin, Chair; Dave Wallace, Vice Chair; and Scott Flippo; Representatives Jeff Wardlaw, Chair; Jeremy Wooldridge, Vice-Chair; Fred Allen, Glen Barnes, Mary Bentley, Cameron Cooper, Denise Jones Ennett, Kenneth B. Ferguson, Dolly Henley, Jack Ladyman, Wayne Long, Mark Perry, Aaron Pilkington, Jay Richardson, Ryan A. Rose, and Bart Schulz

Other members present: Senator Justin Boyd, Alan Clark, Jim Dotson, Mark Johnson, and Bryan King; Representatives Lincoln Barnett, Howard M. Beaty, Jr., Keith Brooks, Rebecca Burkes, Paul Childress, Jon S. Eubanks, Steve Hollowell, Mark D. McElroy, Jessie McGruder, David Ray, Tara Shephard, Tracy Steele, and Dwight Tosh

Representative Wardlaw called the meeting to order.

Consideration to Approve the August 5, 2026, Meeting Minutes [Exhibit B]

Senator Flippo made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Representative Ladyman, and the motion carried.

Presentation on Arkansas Wellness Network [Exhibit C]

Tanya Phillips, M.Ed., M.H.Sc., Founder and President, Arkansas Wellness Network and Reinventing Ourselves; Tyler Phillips, J.D., Vice President, Arkansas Wellness Network; Dr. Kathy Lenahan, OTD, SM, OTR/L, Founder Alta Integrated Wellness; and Kanisha Sanders, RN, NC-BC, Founder, THE RERISE; gave a summary of Arkansas Wellness Network's identity and long-term vision of connecting the state's existing health initiatives.

Discussion of SNAP Error Rates [Exhibit D]

Mary Franklin, Director, Division of County Operations, Department of Human Services (DHS), presented on SNAP Quality Control and Payment Error Rate improvement strategies.

DHS, Review of Rule, Signature Authority for Diabetic Shoes and Shoe Inserts [Exhibit E]

Elizabeth Pitman, Director, Division of Medical Services, DHS, presented a rule change that clarified signature authority and updated the Arkansas Medicaid Prosthetics Provider Manual.

Representative Wardlaw stated that, without objection, the rule stands as reviewed.

Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), Office of Preparedness and Emergency Response Systems, Review of Rule, Rules for Emergency Medical Services [Exhibit F1-F2]

Christy Kresse, Section Chief, Office of Preparedness and Emergency Response Systems, ADH; Craig Smith, Attorney, ADH; and Charles Thompson, Attorney, ADH; presented proposed amendments to comply with the Emergency Medical Services Personnel Licensure Interstate Compact and the abolishing of the Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council.

Representative Wardlaw stated that, without objection, the rule stands as reviewed.

ADH, Division for Health Protection, Health Facility Services Section, Review of Rule, Rules for Critical Access Hospitals in Arkansas [Exhibit G]

Paula Day, Section Chief, Health Facility Services Section, ADH; Craig Smith, Attorney, ADH; and Charles Thompson, Attorney, ADH; presented proposed amendments allowing full practice authority of certified midwives, permitting hospitals to operate retail pharmacies, adding provisions for emergent blood transfusion process, and allowing APRNs to pronounce and document patient death.

Representative Wardlaw stated that, without objection, the rule stands as reviewed.

ADH, Division for Health Protection, Health Facility Services Section, Review of Rule, Rules for Home Health Agencies in Arkansas [Exhibit H]

Paula Day, Section Chief, Health Facility Services Section, ADH; Craig Smith, Attorney, ADH; and Charles Thompson, Attorney, ADH; presented proposed amendments to add Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) provider exemption and allow home caregivers that have previously received defined training to not repeat the defined training.

Representative Wardlaw stated that, without objection, the rule stands as reviewed.

ADH, Division for Health Protection, Health Facility Services Section, Review of Rule, Rules for Hospice Agencies in Arkansas [Exhibit I]

Paula Day, Section Chief, Health Facility Services Section, ADH; Craig Smith, Attorney, ADH; and Charles Thompson, Attorney, ADH; presented proposed amendments to add allowances for electronic medical records and allowing private professional providers to complete building project review and approval.

Representative Wardlaw stated that, without objection, the rule stands as reviewed.

ADH, Division for Health Protection, Health Facility Services Section, Review of Rule, Rules for Hospitals and Related Institutions in Arkansas [Exhibit J]

Paula Day, Section Chief, Health Facility Services Section, ADH; Craig Smith, Attorney, ADH; and Charles Thompson, Attorney, ADH; presented proposed amendments allowing full practice authority of certified midwives and permitting hospitals to operate retail pharmacies.

Representative Wardlaw stated that, without objection, the rule stands as reviewed.

ADH, Division for Health Protection, Health Facility Services Branch, Review of Rule, Rules for Private Care Agencies in Arkansas [Exhibit K]

Paula Day, Section Chief, Health Facility Services Section, ADH; Craig Smith, Attorney, ADH; and Charles Thompson, Attorney, ADH; presented proposed amendments to allow home caregivers that have previously received defined training to not repeat the defined training and revised language throughout the rule including the definition of “contractor”.

Representative Wardlaw stated that, without objection, the rule stands as reviewed.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.