HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Amended: 2002; 2008; 9/2014)

**JURISDICTION**

The IAC Health and Human Services Committee is responsible for all matters relating to county involvement in Medical Indigency and county welfare, health care delivery and health care financing which includes local public health programs, behavioral health social services, health care for the uninsured, long-term care, Medicaid and Medicare.

**STATEMENT OF BASIC PHILOSOPHY**

The Idaho Association of Counties recognizes the responsibility of county governments to protect and enhance the lives of citizens in need of social services. Counties are payers of last resort to service providers; and, as the government closest to the people, counties are best situated to determine the needs of Idaho citizens. The federal and state government should pay for those services that they mandate, and need to adequately fund the programs for which they have statutory responsibility. Cost containment is needed to control the spiraling cost of health care and the philosophy that services and funding for those services are limitless. Citizens need to be held financially accountable and provide for their needs and share in the cost of services to the extent that they are able.

**HEALTH CARE BENEFITS**

IAC should continue to build a coalition of interests that can work together to successfully lobby the legislature in support of health care funding and federal, state and local health programs that are effective. IAC should also continue to work closely with various groups integrating the Affordable Care Act (ACA) into the various state and local programs.

The IAC and its members should creatively search for and share alternative means to minimize overall costs to the county taxpayers. Such as a marketplace solution to cover costs assist individuals with payment of insurance premiums.

Health benefits should be based on need and ability to pay. Counties have the strong ability to make these evaluations and determinations and the legislature should continue to give counties the tools to make these evaluations.

Access to medical care and early intervention would prevent many medical conditions from becoming critical. Accesses to primary and preventive care are key components to lower medical costs and a more productive and higher quality of life for Idaho citizens.

IAC supports the expansion of the state and federal Medicaid program to try to provide health coverage for eligible Idahoans who would otherwise be medically indigent.

IAC supports continued state funding of the Catastrophic Health Care Costs Program.

IAC supports federal and state efforts in restricting undocumented persons from seeking health care benefits, unless they are in this country legally.

IAC opposes any proposal that would, in effect, place additional mandates on property taxpayers for payment of indigent services.

IAC supports programs for prenatal care for pregnant women and programs for infants and young children.

IAC supports rules or laws to allow incarcerated "medicaid eligible" recipients to have medical costs paid for by Medicaid.

IAC supports the ability for counties and the state to explore andcreate pilot programs by using property tax funds to match federal Medicaid dollars, such as crisis centers and recovery centers.

County and community involvement in programs, such as crisis centers and recovery centers, need to have funds available.

# INDIGENT PROTOCOL TASK FORCE

The task force provides an important forum for counties and private medical care providers to work together to improve the process of providing assistance to medically indigent individuals. The task force should work to improve the effectiveness of the process and enhance the communication, education, and timely exchange of accurate information between the various entities involved.

**RURAL HEALTH SERVICES**

The population dispersion and rural nature of Idaho has created special problems in health care delivery. IAC seeks to strengthen efforts to improve access and availability of services throughout the state. By encouraging a variety of services, we seek to avoid inappropriate alternatives where they are the only solution available. These efforts should lead to an improved quality of life for our citizens and ultimately reduce costs by providing efficient and preemptive care. Regional solutions need to be found for areas where services are in short supply or nonexistent.

**HEALTH DISTRICTS**

Health districts are an essential arm for delivering public health services throughout the state; in serving the public by providing education, clinical and preventive health services; and in serving the county through public health inspections and disease control services.

IAC supports the food inspection program conducted by the public health districts. There should be a more equitable distribution for funding the program between the private businesses, state and counties.

IAC supports efforts in providing financial and other assistance to combat the spread of West Nile Virus, swine flu or other diseases or viruses that could affect and be a health threat to the citizens of Idaho. IAC also supports the ability of abatement districts to control the spread of mosquitoes infected with West Nile Virus.

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

IAC supports the combining of the Regional Mental Health Boards with the Regional Advisory Committees to create a Regional Behavioral Health Board, which will provide a more comprehensive structure in looking at the needs of the communities. IAC also supports state funding to enable the new regional boards to accept responsibility for providing support services in their regions.

Idaho Code provides that the state shall provide programs and facilities for the treatment of ~~the~~ mental illness. Alternatives to institutionalization, such as crisis centers, need to be developed by the state with county and community input to provide more appropriate care and reduce costs. This will also reduce the reliance on the law enforcement system as a provider of behavioral health treatment and enable officers to perform their primary responsibilities.

IAC supports providing behavioral health training for law enforcement officers,such as Critical Incident Training (CIT), to better identify and interact with individuals in crisis.

IAC supports the jurisdiction of proceedings for commitment of an individual be held in the court where the person resides except that it may be held in the court of a county where the person is found. IAC supports the use of video conferencing or phone conferencing to speed up the process in order for individuals to receive treatment.

Idaho counties strongly believe that mental health and substance abuse are state responsibilities and should be primarily funded by the state.

Counties recognize their responsibility in dealing with individuals that are in the process of being “involuntary” committed to the state. The counties strongly support that the state assume its costs after commitment, whether in a state or private facility. Such costs should begin within twenty-four hours after being committed.

Substance abuse disables users, causes birth defects, and threatens the safety of the community. Strong state and federal support is needed to assist local jurisdictions in combating this growing problem.

**SOCIAL SERVICES**

Social services for nonmedical indigent individuals are an essential function of county government, such as indigent burials. Counties rely on volunteer assistance and community resources to provide needed services. Counties should be the last resource after all other resources are expended

IAC supports the pass through of funding for social programs from the federal government to the counties as service providers or other community groups that provide assistance.

# EMPLOYMENT

IAC supports local government control with strong business involvement through a Workforce Investment Board in the planning, administration, and supervision of comprehensive local systems of training and employment. To facilitate this process, IAC supports a minimum of federal and state reports, paperwork and regulations in order to allow maximum flexibility in decision making to local elected officials. Authority to operate a broad range of employment-related services should rest with county/local elected officials, who should also leverage all economic development tools to stimulate employment.