Board of Health and Welfare adopts rule for timely activation of crisis standards of care

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At an emergency board meeting today, the Board of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare approved a temporary administrative rule that allows for the timely activation of crisis standards of care during a pandemic, natural disaster. or other emergency that is overwhelming Idaho's healthcare system.

Crisis standards of care are guidelines that help healthcare providers and healthcare systems decide how to deliver the best care possible under the extraordinary circumstances of a disaster. Crisis standards of care guidelines would be used when resources are insufficient to provide the usual standard of care to people who need it. The goal of crisis standards of care is to save as many lives as possible.

The new rule creates an activation advisory committee that will help Department of Health and Welfare Director Dave Jeppesen to decide when crisis standards of care are activated. The rule took effect immediately and won't expire until after the legislative session, which is typically around the end of March or April.

The adoption of the rule comes at a time when COVID-19 cases are surging throughout Idaho and many hospitals are overwhelmed.

"Crisis standards of care are a very last resort, and I hope we don't have to implement them," said DHW Director Dave Jeppesen. "It is preventable, if people choose to follow the recommended guidelines."

When crisis standards of care are in effect, people who need medical care may experience care that is different from what they expect. For example, emergency medical services may need to triage (prioritize) which 9-1-1 calls they respond to. Patients admitted to the hospital may find that hospital beds are not available or are in repurposed rooms (e.g. a conference room) or that laboratory or radiology services are limited or delayed.

The crisis standards of care plan was developed in 2020 and has never been implemented.

Media briefing at 2:30 p.m. today

Because of technical difficulties some media had in joining in the meeting this morning, DHW Director Dave Jeppesen will hold a media briefing at 2:30 p.m. today via Webex and will highlight the results of the meeting and answer questions. For the best possible experience, please download the Webex app on your mobile device or computer. Join the meeting **muted** to start to

eliminate feedback from external microphones. Questions will be accepted in the chat, and by raised hands in the Webex application.

When it's time, join your Webex meeting here.

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The Board of Health and Welfare is a rulemaking advisory body that can adopt, amend, or repeal rules and standards of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. The board is comprised of seven citizen members appointed by the governor.

DHW is dedicated to strengthening the health, safety, and independence of Idahoans. Learn more at healthandwelfare.idaho.gov.

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