

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee
Testimony – LB 1060
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Good Afternoon Senator Avery and members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Dr. Joann Schaefer (J-O-A-N-N S-C-H-A-E-F-E-R). I am the Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Public Health Division in the Department of Health and Human Services. I am here today to testify in favor of LB 1060 which authorizes the electronic publication of information regarding rules and regulations changes.

Use of electronic means provides for quicker and less expensive ways by information can be distributed to the public. The Department of Health and Human Services conducts anywhere between 35 and 50 public hearings per year which, in recent years, has resulted in publication costs of approximately \$20,000 per year. For informational purposes, we would like to note for the committee that, in addition to formal publication as required by statute, DHHS also frequently employs other, informal mechanisms to involve the public in our regulation process. For instance, we frequently involve external stakeholders during or sometimes even prior to our drafting process, well before proposed regulations go to public hearing. When interested parties are known to us, we will often inform those parties directly of upcoming public hearings. In addition, we post all hearing notices on the DHHS website where the public and interested parties may also sign up to receive email alerts when new hearing notices are posted.

We are always looking for ways by which the public can more readily access such information and by which we can garner input from the public on regulations that ultimately will impact them from a health, safety, and wellbeing standpoint. We regard this bill as a means of bringing the State's rulemaking process into the current electronic age and we applaud Senator's Avery's introduction of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.