

# DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & DEPARTMENT OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAMS BUDGET HEARING WRAP

Friday, February 21, 2025



## General Overview:

Dr. Debra Bogen, Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH) and Dr. Latika Davis-Jones, Secretary of the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) testified before the House Appropriations Committee this morning. House Republicans focused their questions on potential impacts of the governor's proposed budget, rural healthcare issues, maternity deserts, and the need for regulatory reform.

## Key Takeaways:

- When asked, the DDAP Secretary was unable to answer how the Administration's proposal for the legalization of recreational marijuana, a federal schedule I narcotic, would impact the department's mission in "preventing and reducing drug, alcohol and gambling addiction and to promote recovery."
- Committee members expressed concerns about the governor's proposal to transfer funds from the Medical Marijuana Program Fund to tourism promotion rather than a relevant health-related program.
- Committee members spent a significant amount of time asking how DOH can improve rural healthcare. While DOH seemed aware of these issues, they remain unaddressed. Issues discussed included:
  - Concerns on staffing
  - Regulatory obstacles to the establishment of rural micro-hospitals
  - Hospital and healthcare facility closures
- Committee members pressed DOH on the need to address maternity care deserts in rural Pennsylvania. Soon, seven counties in Pennsylvania will no longer have labor and delivery services for newborns, up from five last year.

## Notable Q&A:



[Rep. James Barton details concerns from rural Pennsylvania regarding access to hospitals and healthcare.](#)

[Rep. Charity Krupa questioned the DDAP Secretary about the governor's recreational marijuana proposal given DDAP's mission to prevent and reduce drug addiction.](#)



[Rep. Marla Brown asked how DOH is addressing maternity care deserts in rural Pennsylvania.](#)

