

DEADLY CARE?

Scrutiny mounts as 14 die under care of state office of Public Guardianship



JERILEE BENNETT, THE GAZETTE FILE

A homeless man pushes a shopping cart filled with his belongings down a sidewalk in Colorado Springs on Nov. 9, 2020.

BY MARIANNE GOODLAND
marianne.goodland@coloradopolitics.com

Policymakers who launched a pilot program for the state to serve as guardian for individuals who have no family or friends and often end up in hospitals are scrutinizing its work, particularly following the deaths of 14 wards under its care.

Alarmed by the deaths, Gov. Jared Polis also indicated he would seek more oversight of the Office of Public Guardianship, which, as legislators noted, began with the best of intentions but is beset with problems, precisely because it is dealing with a population that faces grave socio-economic, and

acute care and behavioral health challenges.

The overarching question before legislators is whether to expand the pilot program or scuttle it, although the sentiment at the Capitol appears to favor continuing its work, at the very least.

SEE CARE • PAGE 30

PRIMARY BAN

Republicans have sued to keep unaffiliated voters out of the primaries. **Page 3**

CRIME WAVE

Panel debates causes behind Colorado's spiking crime rate. **Page 8**