



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS RECOMMENDATION #4: REDEFINE AND REOPEN EVALUATION & DIAGNOSTIC CLINICS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES MORE EFFECTIVELY

Recommendation Overview:

Montana previously operated three Evaluation and Diagnostic (E&D) Clinics that provided evaluation and screening services as an initial access point to Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) services, supporting roughly 600 families annually. These clinics had locations in Missoula, Bozeman, and Miles City but also operated traveling clinics in other areas of the state. However, the closure of these clinics due to budget reductions created a significant bottleneck for families seeking critical evaluations. **To address this gap and enhance support for families, this recommendation involves piloting a redesigned E&D Clinic model.** It includes collaborating with stakeholders to identify best practices from the existing model, implementing improvements, and exploring ways to create a more accessible "No Wrong Door" system. **While relatively low cost to operate, these clinics have a significant impact on families** by providing opportunities to connect with professionals and improving navigation of the service system.

Intended Impact:

This recommendation proposes piloting the revised program, evaluating its success, and identifying future needs. Example performance measures for this recommendation may include:

- Decreased waitlists.
- Increased access to community-based services.

Governor’s Budget Amounts:

Funding by Year ¹		Funding Sources ²	
SFY26	SFY27	State Special Revenue	Federal Funds
\$1.0M	\$1.0M	\$2.0M	\$0

This recommendation provides funding for three grantees to pilot the revised E&D model. The BHSFG funding request will support stakeholder planning and two years of piloting the revised E&D structure. Following the implementation of the recommendation, annual recurring funding is necessary for the estimated program cost increase. Federal funding for this recommendation assumes CMS approval of a revised cost allocation plan for Medicaid Administrative Claiming.³

Implementation Considerations:

This Phase 1 foundational recommendation establishes the necessary infrastructure for subsequent recommendations to succeed and/or is critical to strengthening and sustaining system operations.⁴ It is designated to receive funding in both SFY26 and SFY27 in the Governor’s budget.

Project Requirements	Project Needs
<p>Staffing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDP staff time will be needed to work with stakeholders to facilitate discussion on the revised model, draft contracts for selected vendors, and submit the funding request to CMS. Ongoing contract monitoring will be needed to ensure vendors can meet the demand for evaluation services.
<p>System / Infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment and coordination of information collection systems across vendors are needed to ensure consistency in tracking.
<p>Legislative / Regulatory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARMs) and intake and eligibility requirements may be needed depending on identified needs from stakeholder engagement. A waiver amendment may be needed if significant changes to eligibility determination for Developmental Disability Program services occur.
<p>Finance / Sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing funding will be needed to sustain E&D clinics in future years. Approval from CMS is required to receive a federal match on qualifying E&D clinic costs. Federal approval will require a cost allocation plan.

¹ In November 2024, Governor Gianforte authorized \$100M for SFY26 and SFY27 to implement 10 recommendations identified by the BHSFG Commission. The cost estimates for this recommendation in the BHSFG final report may vary due to the timing of projected expenditures and additional adjustments.

² Federal match is projected to cover part of ongoing costs but is not expected to begin immediately.

³ The entire projected long-term program cost increase is assumed to be eligible for federal matching.

⁴ The BHSFG recommendations included in the Governor’s budget are all eight Phase 1 recommendations and two Phase 2 recommendations. Phase 2 BHSFG Commissioner Identified Focus Area Recommendations are those the Commission identified as a leading focus area that may be impacted by the completion of a foundational recommendation and/or are not foundational in nature.

For more information contact Macey Curry at Macey.Curry@mt.gov or call (406) 444 - 2727.