

# Governor's Advisory Council Meeting

August 20, 2024, 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM

SLTC – 1100 North Last Chance Gulch

---

## Meeting Minutes

---

In Attendance: Bob Meyers, Gayle Carlson, Peggy Tombre, Jerry Thex, Jr, Audrey Finlayson, Roberta Bigback, Susan Lubke, Alex Ward, Kerrie Reidelbach, Tessa Bailly

Absent: Becky Bird

Guest Presenters: Patrick Kelley, Trevor Tangen, Janet Stellmon, Katy Lovell, Carmen Sciabica

**Welcome and Introductions** – Bob Meyers, chair, welcomed everyone. The council currently has two openings. If you know anyone interested, direct them to the website to apply. Bob has informed the Governor's office about updating council members and the two vacancies.

**Information & Assistance / ADRC NWD Program / Lifespan Respite** – Patrick Kelley, program manager, described the vision for an Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) as creating resource centers in every community. These centers should be highly visible and trusted, where people of all ages, disabilities, and income levels can find objective information on long-term services and support options. ADRCs promote awareness of various options, particularly for underserved, hard-to-reach, and private-pay populations. They connect consumers to needed services—both public and private—through appropriate referrals. Target groups include seniors 60+, people with disabilities, and their caregivers. Montana has eight AAAs designated as ADRCs through small startup grants awarded since 2003.

**Lifespan Respite Grant:** Respite offers temporary relief for caregivers, either planned or in emergencies, to promote ongoing well-being. Programs supported by grant funds include Respite Retreats, the Lifespan Respite Voucher Program (\$700 self-directed model), and the Food for Caregivers Respite Program. Following the meeting, \$250,000 in additional supplemental funding was received from the Administration for Community Living (ACL).

**BOLD Grant:** The Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Bureau under the Public Health and Safety Division received the Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act grant. Funded by the CDC, it supports public health programs addressing Alzheimer's and related dementias (ADRD), focusing on enhancing early diagnosis, treatment, and care for individuals with dementia. Montana's five-year grant includes two years of coalition building and three years of implementation.

**Governor's Conference Planning update** – Tessa Bailly, conference coordinator, shared updates on conference planning, including progress on the agenda, sponsorships, vendors, and the website. A dinner meeting is scheduled for Monday evening at 6:00 PM to discuss logistics. Tessa will send an updated flyer to help spread the news.



DEPARTMENT OF  
**PUBLIC HEALTH &  
HUMAN SERVICES**

**Mini Grant submissions** – Two submissions have been received for mini-grants: Levina Senior Center and Friends of Whitepine Grange in Trout Creek. The submission deadline is September 20. After the meeting, Tessa sent an email to the AAA directors. Gayle will share the information with providers she works with through the Montana Food Bank Network. Gayle, Audrey, and Becky will review the mini-grants.

**Food Insecurity Among Seniors and Older Adults in 2022** – Gayle Carlson shared results from a 2022 survey on food insecurity among seniors and older adults. She presented graphs comparing food insecurity among older adults (age 50-59) and seniors (age 60+) from 2018 to 2022. Montana's overall food insecurity rate is 11.7%, with several counties exceeding that average. The group discussed whether food deserts and access issues or income drive these percentages.

**SLTC Division Interim Administrator update** – Trevor Tangen announced he is no longer the interim administrator for the division. Lindsey Carter, Behavioral Health Development Disabilities bureau chief, took on the role effective August 19 but was unable to join the meeting. Trevor shared that the HB 264 Veterans Long-Term Care Needs Study report is nearing completion, with a presentation to the State Administrative and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee scheduled for September 5.

**HB 922** – Information was provided on the Olmstead decision and the state's contract with the Rural Institute to lead the development and implementation of a new plan ensuring compliance across programs.

**State Health Insurance and Assistance Program (SHIP)** – Janet Stellmon, SHIP director, discussed the program's work assisting Medicare beneficiaries, especially during open enrollment (October 15–December 7). This is an important time to review Part D Drug Plans, which change annually. Janet shared program materials with the group.

**Legal Services Developer Program** – Katy Lovell, program manager, reported staffing changes effective July 1, 2024, reducing FTEs from 2.5 to 1.5. The phone clinic program is suspended pending additional funding. Options under consideration include a possible law school clinic or grant funding.

Scope of Program: In 2023, the program opened 610 cases with 1,653 legal issues. So far in 2024, the program has opened 330 cases with 568 legal issues. In 2023, the primary case types were estate planning, housing, abuse/neglect/exploitation, consumer issues and probate. In 2024, the program drafted 134 Health Care POAs, 125 Financial POAs, 80 Declaration of Homesteads, 50 Transfer on Death Deeds, 98 Living Wills, 123 Wills, 6 Indian Wills, 5 Affidavits to Terminate Joint Tenancy and 1 Quit Claim Deed. The average estate planning package costs between \$2,500 and \$5,000 when completed with a private attorney. The legal document clinics represent tens of thousands of dollars in pro bono assistance in the communities across the state. The legal forms along with instructions are available online:  
<https://dphhs.mt.gov/SLTC/aging/legalservicesdeveloper/disclaimer>

Weekly Trainings: The program offers weekly trainings on Wednesdays at noon, covering topics such as social security, caregiving, and estate planning. Recordings are available online. Anyone interested in registering for the trainings can email Katy at [klovell@mt.gov](mailto:klovell@mt.gov).

Katy is working on an overview of the clinics and updated brochures, which she will send to Kerrie for distribution to the committee.

**OAA Nutrition Services/Evidence-based Programs** – Tessa Bailly, program manager, provided an overview of her work over the past year. With new regulations on the horizon, significant effort and training will be required. She has offered training to AAA providers, and so far, she has visited Area III (Conrad) and Area VI (Polson). After the conference, she plans to provide this training to Area II (Roundup) providers in Billings. Additionally, she has been reviewing Senior Center menus to ensure compliance with the Older Americans Act (OAA) as part of ongoing monitoring efforts.

**Long Term Care Ombudsman Program** – Carmen Sciabica, from the Office of the State Ombudsman, shared a fact sheet explaining the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program. Key points included that the program is mandated under the Older Americans Act and ombudsmen are resident-focused, with their work directed by the resident or their responsible party. They investigate and resolve concerns regarding quality of life or care. She also mentioned vacant ombudsman positions in Butte, Helena, and Fergus County. Additionally, she noted that the Cottonwood purchased the Columbus facility, which had closed but recently reopened with 82 beds.

**Announcements** – Kerrie announced Wilmot Collins as the new Compliance and Communications Specialist. He will begin September 9, monitoring OAA programs, assisting with policy and procedures, and hosting the Aging Horizons Show.

The T-Care contract, supporting caregivers, is still pending. Approval for a one-year, no-cost extension for the Workforce Investment Grant was received. Another extension for the SHIP Workforce Grant has been requested.

### Council Priorities:

**Social Determinants of Health:** Special emphasis on *Access to Nutritious Food Choices, Transportation, Housing, and Social Support/Community Inclusion.*

**Elder Justice and Fraud Prevention:** Special emphasis on *Crime/Fraud/Scam Prevention*

**Age-Friendly Health Systems:** Special emphasis on *Dementia Care and Caregiver Workforce/Family Caregiver*