

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH IN MONTANA

EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE
BECCA BROWN – JUNE 2026

OVERVIEW

According to the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), "Mental health is the component of behavioral health that includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Mental health is a state of well-being that enables us to cope with the stresses of life, realize our abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to our community." A person's mental health may not be the same from day to day, and it can affect how that person goes through daily life. Mental health may also look different for people who are in different stages of life, as demonstrated by the figure below.

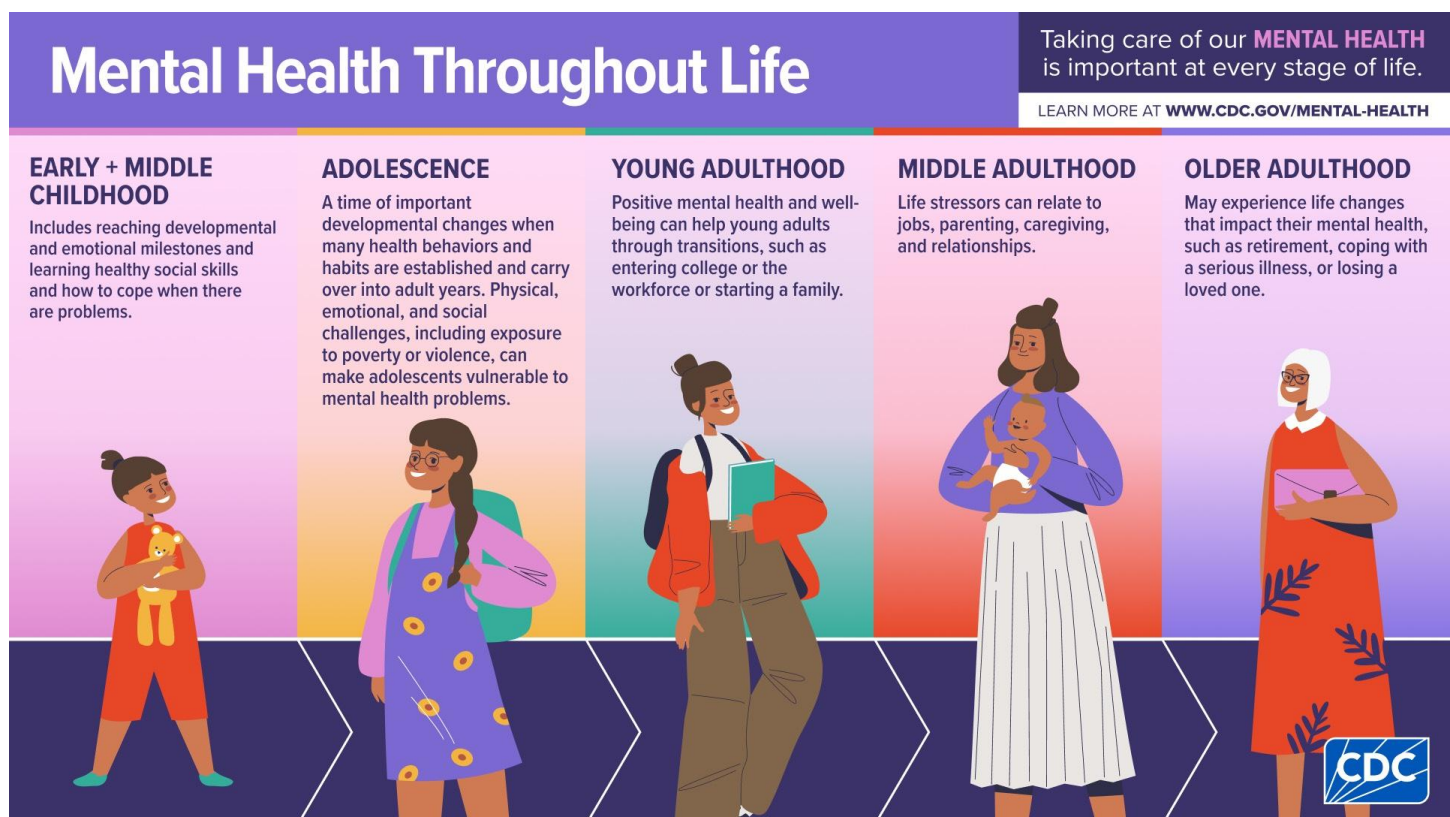


Figure 1: This poster, produced by the CDC, shows examples of how mental health concerns may differ among people at different life stages.

Mental health and physical health are closely linked, as both are components of a person's overall health. A person with depression has an increased risk of developing chronic health conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease. Likewise, a person who develops a chronic health condition is at a higher risk of developing depression or other mental health conditions.

FUNDING FLOW

Because the topic of student mental health is so broad, the state of Montana does not have a single program to address it. Instead, there are multiple available sources of funding to support varied aspects of students' mental health.

The funding sources below are listed in alphabetical order.

Medicaid expenditures are jointly funded by states and the federal government. The federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for Montana is a 60% federal match.

For more information, see the Legislative Fiscal Division's (LFD) FMAP overview here:

<https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2025-Biennium/Special-Topics/Medicaid/FMAP-Overview.pdf>

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS (BHSFG)

When House Bill 872 (2023) was signed into law in May 2023, the Behavioral Health System for Future Generations (BHSFG) commission was formed to expand intensive and community-based behavioral health (BH) and developmental disabilities (DD) services statewide. This legislation included a \$300 million investment from multiple sources over the 2023-24 biennium, and the work would conclude before the bill's sunset date of July 1, 2025. One of the seven core priorities identified by the commission was the "capacity of children's mental health service delivery system."

The BHSFG commission's work culminated in the September 2024 final report to the governor, described as a "comprehensive, vetted, and actionable roadmap for future generations." The final report included 22 recommendations and 11 near-term initiatives (NTIs) centering around workforce, case management, and continuum capacity. The report states that Montana "has among the highest rates of mental illness in the country. In 2023, 34% of adults in Montana reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder, compared to 32.3% in the United States. ... In 2021 nearly one-third of Medicaid expansion enrollees (36,949) had one or more BH diagnoses recorded on a Medicaid claim."

A majority of the recommendations in the final report (17 out of 22) focus on Montana's behavioral health system. The commission found that access to BH services is a challenge and that there is a severe ongoing shortage of providers, especially in remote, rural, and frontier areas. Cost estimates accompanying the BH recommendations included \$36.5 million in one-time-only funding, and \$50.9 million in operational costs, both coming from BHSFG funding. Recommendation #18 is specific to school-based behavioral health initiatives, was approved by Governor Gianforte, and included in his 2027 biennium budget proposal. The recommendation lists the **reversal of the Medicaid free care rule** (discussed in more detail below) as one option for increased flexibility.

HEALING AND ENDING ADDICTION THROUGH RECOVERY AND TREATMENT (HEART)

Established in [House Bill 701 \(2021\)](#) and codified in [section 16-12-122, MCA](#), the [HEART Initiative](#) utilizes some tax revenue from the sale of recreational marijuana to leverage additional Medicaid funding through a federal match, investing up to \$25 million per year to provide behavioral health and treatment programs for Montana communities.

The HEART 1115 waiver, which was approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), allows the use of Medicaid funds for four categories of services that are not currently reimbursable through traditional Medicaid:

- Expanded inpatient and residential substance use disorder (SUD) treatment
- Contingency management
- Tenancy support services
- Justice involved re-entry services

[Other HEART initiative components](#) also have allowable uses connected to mental health:

- Mobile crisis response is now a billable Medicaid service.
- Home visiting programs support families impacted by behavioral health issues by providing services like parenting skill training, screenings, and referrals for treatment.
- \$500,000 annually is allocated to tribal governments to fill locally identified gaps, including mental health promotion and mental health crisis, treatment, and recovery services.
- In 2022, DPHHS awarded \$2.7 million to local detention centers to implement services, including certified behavioral health peer support and care coordination.

MONTANA HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS

[Montana Healthcare Programs](#) provides medical assistance for certain individuals and families with low income. It was enacted as law in 1965 and jointly funded by federal and state entities. **Montana Healthcare Programs reimburses some health-related services provided to children in a school setting** when the following criteria are met:

- The child qualifies for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- The services are written into an Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- The services are not free. Providers may not bill Montana Healthcare Programs for any services that are generally offered to all members without charge.

The [School-Based Services Manual](#) contains the **current policy for covered services** under Montana Healthcare Programs. The manual was last updated in April 2022 and is intended to inform schools on the appropriate methods for claiming reimbursement for the costs of health-related services provided. The Montana Healthcare Programs [Fee Schedule for School-Based Health Services](#) lists **which services are covered and how much is reimbursed** for each service. The July 2025 fee schedule was last revised in March 2026.

RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM (RHTP)

Established as part of [H.R.1](#) (enacted by Congress on July 4, 2025), the federal [Rural Health Transformation Program \(RHTP\)](#) funding will be allocated to states through an approval process over 5 fiscal years. In December 2025, Montana DPHHS was awarded a historic \$233 million, as the first of a 5-year federal investment (up to \$1.2 billion) to stabilize and modernize rural health care delivery, supporting rural health providers in delivering sustainable, high-quality care, and ensuring access for those in need of services. Montana received the fourth highest funding award among all 50 states. The main goal is to provide Montana residents with affordable, high-quality care regardless of geography; this goal will be achieved through the [5 core initiatives](#) identified in DPHHS' [RHTP Project Summary](#).

TITLE IV, PART A: STUDENT SUPPORT & ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT (SSAE)

[Title IV Part A](#), also known as Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE), is part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Schools can utilize [Title IV](#) dollars to support mental health costs. These dollars are provided to schools through a formula, and they can be utilized to improve access to a well-rounded education, to improve school conditions for student learning, for safe and healthy students, and for effective use of technology to improve academic achievement.

During the 2022-2023 school year:

- 62 local education agencies (LEAs) utilized Title IV funds for well-rounded education;
- 58 LEAs used Title IV funds for safe and healthy students; and
- 217 LEAs transferred their Title IV-A dollars to Title I-A for targeted or schoolwide use, allowing the schools to consolidate federal, state, and local funds to upgrade an entire educational program, instead of focusing solely on children who are identified as failing or at risk of failing to meet state standards.

THE "FREE CARE" RULE

Historically, the Medicaid "free care" rule said that districts may not bill Medicaid for general services that are offered to all students, or offered free of charge.

However, in December 2014, the CMS [announced a policy shift](#): **Schools can seek Medicaid reimbursement for services covered under the approved state plan, provided to Medicaid beneficiaries, regardless of whether there is any charge for the service.**

The policy shift did not change the fact that certain other requirements must be met, such as the student being eligible for Medicaid, the provider being qualified, and payments not being duplicative.

This policy shift gave states the option to amend their Medicaid State Plan to allow schools to bill Medicaid for school-based services provided to a larger population of students, instead of only those students who are on an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

SUPPORT AND INITIATIVES AT THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (OPI)

In 2020, Montana's Office of Public Instruction (OPI) was awarded a [5-year grant](#) through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for the Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness And Resiliency in Education) initiative to support school districts across the state in developing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for mental health promotion and response.

Despite the conclusion of the dedicated Project AWARE funding to mental health in December 2025, OPI continues to support student mental health with ongoing initiatives:

- [Whole Child Skill Development](#) – OPI provides support to schools in implementing and expanding their whole child skills for students, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and the ability to make responsible decisions. The agency has compiled competencies that are aligned with standards that include ways to incorporate the development of the whole child skills in the classroom.
- [Positive School Climate](#) – With the requirement that all schools must complete a school climate survey, OPI has created a toolkit for how to interpret the results. This toolkit includes a framework for integrating the survey results into the school's strategic action plan. OPI provides technical assistance and support to schools utilizing this framework.

Other things are still in the works, so visit OPI's [School Mental Health](#) website to find more resources and information for schools and educators.

POTENTIAL COMMITTEE ACTIONS

This section is intended to provide a **starting point** for the committee's discussion, and includes a collection of **potential** committee actions and recommendations.

1. Instruct DPHHS to submit a State Plan Amendment (SPA) to the CMS to **reverse the free care rule** and allow for expanded reimbursement for students who do not have an IEP. This would allow school districts and co-ops to bill Medicaid for services provided to any Medicaid-eligible student.
2. Recommend that the 2027 Legislature **increase the budget appropriation for the BHDD division** of DPHHS in House Bill 2 (*section B, program 10*), so that the department has the necessary budget authority to process increased Medicaid reimbursements.
 - a. Determine a percentage or a dollar amount to increase the appropriation by.
 - b. Assign the appropriation a "restricted" designation so that the funds may only be used for the purposes of school-based Medicaid reimbursements.
 - c. Work with LFD staff to create a narrative statement in HB 2 to communicate the Legislature's intended use of the budget increase.
3. Instruct DPHHS to submit a SPA to **expand eligible services** reimbursable under Medicaid to include:
 - a. behavioral assessment or screening;
 - b. brief intervention;
 - c. coaching;
 - d. treatment interventions; and
 - e. other services to be determined at the committee's discretion.
4. Establish a state-level **clearinghouse of mental health screeners and interventions** for schools, educators, and behavioral health providers to access.
 - a. Provide funding for the clearinghouse:
 - i. appropriate level of startup funding for staffing, purchasing screeners, etc.; and
 - ii. ongoing operational funding for staffing, purchasing, training, coaching, etc.
 - b. Direct the clearinghouse to:
 - i. during the first biennium of existence, inventory and catalog existing school-based behavioral health services and programs being utilized by districts;
 - ii. develop a core set of recommended evidence-based interventions for MTSS tiers I, II, and III;
 - iii. provide training and technical assistance to school districts and school-linked community providers on the MTSS framework and the recommended evidence-based interventions; and
 - iv. provide state-level procurement of curriculum, screeners, and other resources, following proper state-level procurement processes.

Medicaid expenditures are jointly funded by states and the federal government.

The federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for Montana is a 60% federal match.

For more information, see the Legislative Fiscal Division's (LFD) FMAP overview here:
<https://leg.mt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2025-Biennium/Special-Topics/Medicaid/FMAP-Overview.pdf>

5. Provide **implementation funding** for schools/districts/co-ops to stand up their own behavioral health monitoring and response programs.
6. Implement **technical support services** to assist schools with the Medicaid reimbursement process.
7. Require DPHHS to coordinate with county or regional **interdisciplinary child information and school safety teams** pursuant to [section 52-2-211, MCA](#).
8. Require DPHHS to adopt the **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework** to support a continuum of behavioral health services and supports provided to children under 18 years of age. Consider:
 - a. early preventative identification as well as support for already identified students; and
 - b. codification of the definition of MTSS in the MCA.
9. Increase schools' **responsiveness to crises** that arise in their communities.
 - a. Expand the flexibility of existing funding sources.
 - b. Allow schools direct (just-in-time) access to resources and funding instead of requiring schools to go through an agency.
10. Increase the presence of **credentialed individuals** within school buildings to be available any time mental health, behavioral health, or crisis response service is needed. Ensure that co-ops have the ability to access credentialed staff as well.
11. Develop pertinent **metrics and reporting procedures** to measure desired outcomes. Consider:
 - a. analysis or evaluation of the appropriateness of interventions provided to children through targeted school-based services within MTSS;
 - b. outcome measures similar to [section 53-21-508, MCA](#) Monitoring of children's mental health outcomes; and
 - c. determination of which interim committee(s) will receive/review reports, and how frequently.
12. Prioritize health services in **remote, rural, and frontier areas** to support schools without existing programs or schools that would benefit from additional capacity.
13. Update the **Montana Medicaid program** codified in [section 53-6-101, MCA](#), to include behavioral health services eligible for reimbursement under Medicaid, when provided by a school district, without regard to whether the services are provided under an IEP.

EDIC INTERIM STUDY ON IMPROVING SCHOOL SAFETY

The 2025-26 Education Interim Committee (EDIC) has undertaken a study on improving school safety, pursuant to [Joint Resolution 53 \(2025\)](#), and some of the study's topics overlap with efforts to improve student mental health. The [Montana Safe Schools Center \(MSSC\)](#) at the University of Montana has been an integral resource during this study, providing an overview of school safety and preparedness across the state, as well as identifying and explaining how the [Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety](#) may be implemented in Montana schools.

One recommendation that has been discussed as part of the HJ 53 study is a **Statewide Tip Line**. The MSSC implemented a [SaferMT 24/7/365 anonymous hotline](#) in 2021 to collect tips on any concerns regarding a school or a student. If the Legislature decides to fund a tip line, it would be another state-level resource accessible to schools and communities to monitor and report concerns about student behavior and mental health.

Another recommendation discussed during the HJ 53 study is the implementation of a **behavioral threat assessment** process to identify, investigate, manage, and assess school threats. This would include threats from a student to self, property, or others. The School Administrators of Montana (SAM) conducted a **school-based behavioral health inventory** during the fall of 2024. The survey analysis from multiple perspectives, including disaggregating by district type or focusing on tribal schools, is available in Appendix B. This inventory may serve as an example of the kinds of data the Legislature may request from the Safe Schools Center, a state-level clearinghouse, or another entity as determined by the committee.

One other topic discussed throughout the study is the collection of **school climate** data – that is, the atmosphere of learning within a school building. The [U.S. Department of Education \(ED\)](#) notes that “a positive school climate is essential to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students.” School climate is also listed in the [Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety](#). A positive school climate is associated with improved academic outcomes as well as reductions in bullying, greater student engagement, and lower levels of teacher burnout.

CONCLUSION

As evidenced by the number of programs mentioned in this summary report, and the variety of terms and resources listed in the appendices, the state of Montana has made notable efforts to support the mental and behavioral health of students in our schools.

State efforts are spread between the Office of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Health and Human Services. Other entities outside state government, including the Montana Safe Schools Center and the School Administrators of Montana, have contributed to these efforts as well.

The Legislature has an opportunity to expand the services provided to students in Montana’s schools by directing DPHHS to reverse the Medicaid “free care” rule. This would require additional appropriation to the department in order to meet the federal match and to process increased Medicaid reimbursements.

Policy recommendations may be made by the [Education Interim Committee](#) in the form of a committee bill draft or a committee letter advising next steps. Any policies requiring a fiscal infusion, such as the reversal of the Medicaid free care rule, would need to also go through the [Education Interim Budget subcommittee](#) and perhaps the [School Funding Interim Commission](#) as well.

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND TERMINOLOGY

Terminology below is used frequently when discussing various aspects of student mental health. Some of the terms have been used in the report above, and other terms have been provided as helpful reference.

- 504 = Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is a federal civil rights law and prohibits discrimination against students with disabilities by school districts receiving federal financial assistance.
- ABA = Applied Behavior Analysis
- BH / BHDD = Behavioral Health / Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
- BTA = Behavioral Threat Assessment
- CAH = Critical Access Hospital
- CCBHC = Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic
- CHIP = Children's Health Insurance Program
- CMH / CMHB = Children's Mental Health / Children's Mental Health Bureau
- CMHC = Community Mental Health Center
- CMS = Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- CSCT = Comprehensive School and Community Treatment
- DPHHS = Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
- E&D = Evaluation & Diagnostic
- ESEA = Elementary and Secondary Education Act; first passed in 1965, ESEA is the U.S. Department of Education's primary funding vehicle for providing resources to the nation's schools. Every few years since 1965, the "Act" has been modified and reauthorized; since it has been a reauthorization of the same Act, the general name, ESEA, has remained the same.
- ESSA = Every Student Succeeds Act; passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama on December 10, 2015.
- FERPA = Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
- FQHC = Federally Qualified Health Center
- FMHF = Forensic Mental Health Facility
- FPS / FPSS = Family Peer Support / Family Peer Support Services
- HCBS = Home and Community-Based Services
- HEART = Healing and Ending Addiction Through Recovery and Treatment
- HIPAA = Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
- HRSA = Health Resources and Services Administration

- IDEA = Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- IEP = Individualized Education Program
- IMD = Institution for Mental Diseases
- LEA = Local Education Agency (generally, this term indicates a school district)
- MCR = Mobile Crisis Response
- MHSP = Mental Health Services Plan
- MTSS = Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- NOFO = Notice of Funding Opportunity
- OPI = Montana Office of Public Instruction
- OT = Occupational Therapy
- PAX, QPR, Second Step, SOS, YAMH = Examples of curriculum / training programs to identify and support students' mental health, behaviors, mindset, and interpersonal skills.
- PT = Physical Therapy
- PRTF = Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility
- RBHI = Rural Behavioral Health Institute
- RHTP / CoE = Rural Health Transformation Program / Center of Excellence
- SAC = Stakeholder Advisory Committee of the Rural Health Transformation Program
- SAMHSA = Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- SBHC = School-Based Health Center
- SBOT = School-Based Outpatient Treatment
- SDMI / SMI = Severe and Disabling Mental Illness / Serious Mental Illness
- SED = Serious Emotional Disturbance
- SPA = State Plan Amendment
- SRA = Suicide Risk Assessment
- SSAE = Student Support and Academic Enrichment (also known as Title IV-A of ESSA)
- TCM = Targeted Case Management
- TGH or TGF = Therapeutic Group Home / Therapeutic Group Facility
- VBP = Value-Based Purchasing
- YRBS = Youth Risk Behavior Survey

APPENDIX B: STATE EFFORTS IN RECENT LEGISLATIVE CYCLES

Student mental health is a complex issue because it involves both education and public health. Throughout Montana, multiple entities have made efforts in recent years to understand the wider issue and to begin to respond. This section compiles efforts made through various state-level agencies and/or legislative committees.

EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE (EDIC)

The EDIC is a bipartisan legislative committee focusing on policy issues in the field of public education. For more information, visit the committee website at: <https://committees.legmt.gov/#/nonStandingCommittees/4>

- Montana Safe Schools Center slides (March 2026)
<https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/EDIC/March-2026/1.EDIC-HJ-53-Slide-Deck.v2.pdf>
- Montana Safe Schools Center policy recommendations based on 10 Essential Actions in School Safety (March 2026) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/EDIC/March-2026/1.MSSC-Recommendations-for-School-Safety.pdf>
- OPI “Student Mental Health in Montana” overview slides presented to EDIC (March 2026)
https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/EDIC/March-2026/1.OPI_YRBS-EDIC-Presentation.pdf
- Colorado Office of School Safety presentation to EDIC (March 2026)
<https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/EDIC/March-2026/1.Colorado-OSS.Montana-16.26.pdf>
- Utah School Safety Center presentation to EDIC (March 2026)
<https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/EDIC/March-2026/1.Utah-School-safety-center-EDIC.pdf>
- OPI CSCT updates provided to EDIC:
 - (March 2022) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Education/Meetings/March-2022/CSCT-March-2022-OPI.pdf>
 - (January 2022) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Education/Meetings/January-2022/CSCT-Update.pdf>
 - Memo of Understanding to CSCT districts (January 2022)
<https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Education/Meetings/January-2022/CSCT-MOU.pdf>

- Packet of CSCT materials (January 2022)
https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Education/Meetings/January-2022/CSCT_New.pdf
- 2021-22 CSCT Accounting Guidance [https://archive.legmt.gov/content/publications/fiscal/2023-Interim/IBC-E/CSCT-Accounting-Guidance-\(Sharyl-Allen\).pdf](https://archive.legmt.gov/content/publications/fiscal/2023-Interim/IBC-E/CSCT-Accounting-Guidance-(Sharyl-Allen).pdf)
- 2021-22 CSCT Administration Guidance [https://archive.legmt.gov/content/publications/fiscal/2023-Interim/IBC-E/CSCT-OPIDPHHS-Blended-Guidance-Doc-\(Sharyl-Allen\).pdf](https://archive.legmt.gov/content/publications/fiscal/2023-Interim/IBC-E/CSCT-OPIDPHHS-Blended-Guidance-Doc-(Sharyl-Allen).pdf)
- 2021 Guidance document on CSCT https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Education/Meetings/July-2021/2021-7-9-CSCT_IGT_School_Guidance-final.pdf
- CSCT update (September 2021) [https://archive.legmt.gov/content/publications/fiscal/2023-Interim/IBC-E/CSCT-Interim-Committee-Report-\(Sharyl-Allen\).pdf](https://archive.legmt.gov/content/publications/fiscal/2023-Interim/IBC-E/CSCT-Interim-Committee-Report-(Sharyl-Allen).pdf)
- DPHHS CSCT update (September 2021) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Education/Meetings/Sept-2021/CSCT-Update-Memo-9-7-2021.pdf> and 11-7-21 Update <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Education/Meetings/Nov-2021/DPHHS-CSCT-update-11-7-2021.pdf>

INTERIM BUDGET COMMITTEES (IBCs)

The Interim Budget Committees (IBCs) are joint subcommittees of the [Senate Finance and Claims](#) and the [House Appropriations](#) standing session committees, with bipartisan membership from each chamber.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INTERIM BUDGET COMMITTEE (IBC-B)

The Section B budget subcommittee focuses on public health and human services. For more information, visit the committee website at: <https://committees.legmt.gov/#/nonStandingCommittees/41>

- DPHHS Statewide Crisis System (December 2025) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2027-Biennium/Committees/Section-B/DPHHS-Statewide-Crisis-Systems-Dec2025.pdf>
- Montana Health Network, Eastern Montana Behavioral Health Crisis Services (December 2025) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2027-Biennium/Committees/Section-B/MHN-Eastern-MT-Behavioral-Health-Crisis-Services-Dec2025.pdf>
- Lewis & Clark County Crisis Services handout (December 2025) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2027-Biennium/Committees/Section-B/LCC-Crisis-Services-Handout-Dec2025.pdf>

- Behavioral Health System for Future Generations (BHSFG) school-based initiative fact sheets
 - February 11, 2025 <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/Archive/2025Legislature/BHSFG18-InvestinSchool-BasedBehavioralHealthInitiatives.pdf>
 - January 20, 2025: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/Archive/2025Legislature/BHSFG-18-School-BasedBehavioralHealth.pdf>
- DPHHS BHDD division presentation on Medicaid and Health Services Practice (January 2025)
 - Full report https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/Archive/2025Legislature/10_BHDD.pdf
 - Report in slideshow format <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/Archive/2025Legislature/BHDDPowerPointPresentationJan2125.pdf>
- BHSFG Commission Report (July 2024) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2025-Biennium/Section-B/Interim/BHSFG-Commission-Report-July2024.pdf>
- BHSFG Commission presentation (July 2024) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2025-Biennium/Section-B/Interim/BHSFG-Presentation-July23-2024.pdf>
- DPHHS CSCT Intergovernmental Transfer (IGT) Process (July 2024) <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/BHDD/CMB/CSCT/CSCTIGTOverview072324.pdf>
- DPHHS BHSFG Commission presentation on the Children's Mental Health Bureau (January 2024) <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/FutureGenerations/BehavioralHealth/CMHBBHSFGCommissionDeck.pdf>
- RBHI presentation "Screening Linked to Care (SLTC): Reducing Youth Suicide in Schools (January 2024) <https://youtu.be/YmcWKI54uec?si=HAFxE6yf3EaWevBh&t=20389>
- DPHHS BHSFG recommendation: Comprehensive Crisis Worker Curriculum and Certification Course (December 2023) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2025-Biennium/Section-B/Interim/DPHHS-BHSFGRec-Crisis-Curriculum-Dec2023.pdf>
- DPHHS BHSFG recommendation: Grants to support Mobile Crisis Response and Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Services (December 2023) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2025-Biennium/Section-B/Interim/DPHHS-BHSFGRec-Crisis-Services-Dec2023.pdf>
- A&M Contract Approach to BHSFG HB 872 (September 2023) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2025-Biennium/Section-B/Interim/HB-872-BHSFG-A-M-Strategy.pdf>
- DPHHS HB 872: Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Alternative Settings Study Design And Implementation Planning (September 2023) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2025-Biennium/Section-B/Interim/HB-872-BHSFG-Guidehouse-Alternative-Settings.pdf>

- BHSFG Commission Priorities (August 2023) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2025-Biennium/Section-B/Interim/HB-872-BHSFG-Commission-Priorities-for-09082023.pdf>
- DPHHS CSCT Intergovernmental Transfer (IGT) Process Flow Chart (May 2023) <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/BHDD/CMB/CSCT/CSCTIGTProcessFlowChartDPHHS072323.pdf>
- DPHHS Children's Mental Health work session slides (January 2023) <https://docs.legmt.gov/download-ticket?ticketId=1de44b9b-9756-4538-a425-4d8398935c9c>
- DPHHS CSCT Vital Factors Overview (March 2022) <https://docs.legmt.gov/download-ticket?ticketId=22a989df-cec8-4657-9ef0-20002472b1e0>

EDUCATION INTERIM BUDGET COMMITTEE (IBC-E)

The Section E budget subcommittee focuses on education. For more information, visit the committee website at: <https://committees.legmt.gov/#/nonStandingCommittees/10>

- OPI School-Based Behavioral Health Efforts (December 2025) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2027-Biennium/Committees/Section-E/OPI-School-Based-Behavioral-Health-Efforts-Dec2025.pdf>

JOINT MEETING SECTIONS B&E – DECEMBER 17, 2025

The IBC-B and IBC-E budget subcommittees met jointly on December 17, 2025. On the agenda were a couple of updates related to student mental health.

- DPHHS School-Based Behavioral Health Efforts <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2027-Biennium/Committees/Section-B/DPHHS-School-Based-Behavioral-Health-Efforts-Dec2025.pdf>
- DPHHS Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2027-Biennium/Committees/Section-B/DPHHS-RHTP-Dec2025.pdf>
- SAM's school-based behavioral health inventory
 - Summary April 2025, tribal focus <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2027-Biennium/Committees/Section-B/Joint-Behavioral-Health-Survey-Summary-Tribal-School-Focus-Apr25-IBC-Dec2025.pdf>
 - Summary January 2025 <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2027-Biennium/Committees/Section-B/Joint-Behavioral-Health-Survey-Summary-Jan25-IBC-Dec2025.pdf>

- Summary December 2024 <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2027-Biennium/Committees/Section-B/Joint-Behavioral-Health-Survey-Summary-Dec24-IBC-Dec2025.pdf>
- Summary December 2024, disaggregated by district type <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2027-Biennium/Committees/Section-B/Joint-Behavioral-Health-Survey-Summary-Disaggregated-Dec24-IBC-Dec2025.pdf>

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INTERIM COMMITTEE (CHS)

CHS is a bipartisan legislative committee focusing on policy issues in the field of public health and human services. For more information, visit the committee website at: <https://committees.legmt.gov/#/nonStandingCommittees/7>

- DPHHS Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) web page: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/RuralHealthTransformationProgram/>
- CHS Final Report on Mental Health Studies incl. HJ 35 (August 2022) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Children-Families/Studies/SJR-14/sept2022-final-mental-health-studies-report.pdf>
- Background on School-Based Depression Screening (January 2022) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Children-Families/Studies/HJR-35/jan2022-school-based-depression-screening.pdf>
- Background on Children's System of Care Statutes (January 2022) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Children-Families/Studies/HJR-35/jan2022-system-of-care-briefing-paper.pdf>
- DPHHS CSCT Statistics (January 2022) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Children-Families/Studies/HJR-35/jan2022-csct-stats-dphhs.pdf>
- OPI Student Mental Wellbeing in Schools (September 2021) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Children-Families/Studies/HJR-35/sept2021-opi-powerpoint-student-mental-wellbeing.pdf>
- DPHHS Children's Mental Health Bureau Medicaid Services Continuum of Care (September 2021) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Children-Families/Studies/HJR-35/sept2021-cmhb-medicaid-continuum-of-care.pdf>
- 2021 HJ 35: Children's Mental Health Study (web page) <https://archive.legmt.gov/committees/interim/past-interim-committees/2021-2022/2021cfhhs/hjr-35/index.html>
- 2021 HJ 35 (joint resolution text) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2021-2022/Children-Families/Studies/HJR-35/hjr35.pdf>

SCHOOL FUNDING INTERIM COMMISSION (SFIC)

The SFIC (also known as the Decennial School Funding Study) convenes every 10 years to review Montana's elementary and secondary school funding formula to ensure schools are funded adequately and equitably. For more information, visit the committee website at: <https://committees.legmt.gov/#/nonStandingCommittees/43>

- 2015-16 SFIC Recommendations, including Special Needs and Gifted/Talented
<https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/SFIC/August-14-2025/SFIC-recs-LEG-responses-updated-for-2025-SFIC.pdf>
- 21st Century School Fund "State of Our Schools" including some mention of facility effects on mental health (2025) <https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/SFIC/February-11-12-2026/2025-State-of-Schools-020226.pdf>
- Panel Discussion: Student Mental Health and Behavior (February 2026)
<https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/SFIC/February-11-12-2026/Panel-handout-Student-Mental-Health-and-Behavior.pdf>
- OPI Student Mental Health in Montana presentation (February 2026)
<https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/SFIC/February-11-12-2026/OPI-Mental-Health-YRBS-SFIC-Presentation.pdf>
- OPI 2025 Youth Mental Health Profiles (February 2026)
<https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/SFIC/February-11-12-2026/OPI-2025-Youth-Mental-Health-Profiles-Handout-SFIC.pdf>
- SAM School-Based Behavioral Health Survey (third heading on this web page)
https://www.sammt.org/2025_legislative_session.php
- Helena Public Schools Student Mental Health Resources & Initiatives (February 2026)
<https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/SFIC/February-11-12-2026/Helena-Public-Schools-Mental-Health-Support-2.3.26.pdf>
- Montana Healthcare Foundation School-Based Health Care in Montana survey (2025)
https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/SFIC/February-11-12-2026/MTHF-School-Based-Health-Centers-One-Pager_2025.pdf
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS): 2013-2023 Data Summary & Trends Report
<https://archive.legmt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2025-2026/SFIC/February-11-12-2026/2023-CDC-YRBS-Report.pdf>

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES (NCSL) RESOURCES

The [National Conference of State Legislatures \(NCSL\)](#), created by state legislators and legislative staff in 1975, serves America's 50 states, commonwealths, territories and the District of Columbia. Every state legislator and staffer is a member of the organization and has complete access to the latest in bipartisan policy research, training resources, and technical assistance tailored specifically to their needs.

- 5/17/26 NCSL "Our American States" podcast "Mental Health and the Workplace" <https://ncsl-podcasts.simplecast.com/episodes/mental-health-and-the-workplace-oas-episode-264-may-17-2026>
- 4/17/26 NCSL Policy Brief "Improving Youth Mental Health by Addressing Digital Violence" <https://www.ncsl.org/health/improving-youth-mental-health-by-addressing-digital-violence>
- (Updated 1/28/26) NCSL Pre-K-12 Education Legislation Database <https://www.ncsl.org/education/pre-k-12-education-legislation-database> can be filtered to show legislation in "Student Mental Health" topic.
- 1/6/26 NCSL news "Helping the Rural US Overcome its Rising Suicide Rates" <https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/helping-the-rural-us-overcome-its-rising-suicide-rates>
- (Updated 12/29/25) NCSL Snapshot "Meeting Children Where They Are: Mental Health Screening and Early Intervention Policies" <https://www.ncsl.org/health/meeting-children-where-they-are-mental-health-screening-and-early-intervention-policies>
- 8/24/25 NCSL "Our American States" podcast "Understanding Kids, Smartphones, and Social Media" <https://ncsl-podcasts.simplecast.com/episodes/understanding-kids-smartphones-and-social-media-oas-episode-244>
- 7/24/25 NCSL news "4 Things to Know About Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics" <https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/4-things-to-know-about-certified-community-behavioral-health-clinics>
- 7/14/25 NCSL news "How to Address the Shortage of Mental Health Workers? Create More Pathways to Certification" <https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/how-to-address-the-shortage-of-mental-health-workers-create-more-pathways-to-certification>
- 6/8/25 NCSL "Our American States" podcast "Shortages in the Behavioral Health Workforce" <https://ncsl-podcasts.simplecast.com/episodes/shortages-in-the-behavioral-health-workforce-oas-episode-235>
- 9/27/24 NCSL Brief "Youth Mental Health: States Pursue Prevention, Treatment, and Crisis Response" <https://www.ncsl.org/health/youth-mental-health-states-pursue-prevention-treatment-and-crisis-response>
- 5/31/23 NCSL "Our American States" podcast "Exploring Policy Solutions to Mental Health Treatment" <https://ncsl-podcasts.simplecast.com/episodes/exploring-policy-solutions-to-mental-health-treatment-oas-episode-186>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- DPHHS Comprehensive School and Community Treatment (CSCT) webpage:
<https://dphhs.mt.gov/BHDD/cmb/ComprehensiveSchoolandCommunityTreatmentCSCT>
- 10/9/25 SAM Webinar on Montana Early Intervention Survey (EIS)
<https://youtu.be/C6MGgENP78?si=Tp6iR08LEM8cg6MT>
- National Center for Rural School Mental Health (a partnership between the University of Montana and two other universities in Missouri and Virginia) <https://ruralsmh.com/>
 - EIS Intervention Hub – allows teachers and other school staff to select interventions based on identified need, grade level, MTSS level. <https://ruralsmh.com/intervention-hub/>