

NEWS

Department of Public Health and Human Services

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Great Beginnings, Great Families conference kicks off in Helena Tuesday, July 7

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) will kick off the Great Beginnings, Great Families conference on Tuesday, July 7 at the Great Northern Best Western in Helena.

The conference runs July 7-9, 2015.

Among those attending are professionals who work with and on behalf of young children in various fields, including early childhood, public health, and mental health. The purpose of the conference is to increase the knowledge of early childhood systems and infrastructure and enhance family support best practices.

On Tuesday, July 7, at 9:35 a.m. keynote speaker, **Dr. Donna Beegle from Communication Across Barriers**, will present on “Tools to Prevent the Trauma Inflicted by Poverty.” This is the second year Dr. Beegle has presented at this conference. The Oregon resident is an authentic voice who speaks, writes, and trains across the nation on working more effectively with families who live in the crisis to break the iron cage of poverty.

On Wednesday, July 8, at 9:15 a.m., **Dr. Clayton Small from Native P.R.I.D.E.** will present a keynote address titled, “Healing from Childhood Trauma and Moving Forward as Healthy Parents and Families.” Dr. Small is a native Montanan of the Northern Cheyenne Nation. He founded Native P.R.I.D.E. to assist Native people in the development and implementation of cultural and spiritual based programs that inspire wellness/healing, leadership development, and positive changes for individuals, families, and communities.

DPHHS Director Richard Opper will kick off the conference on July 7 at 9 a.m.

First Lady of Montana Lisa Bullock will provide the closing keynote address on July 9 at 11:30 a.m. The First Lady’s work focuses on childhood hunger and early childhood education in Montana. She is involved in the Breakfast After the Bell initiative and No Kid Hungry program.

Registration is available on-site at the conference location; Great Northern Best Western Hotel in Helena. Registration opens at 8 a.m. on July 7, 2015. For more information and conference details, visit <http://dphhs.mt.gov/gbgfconference>.

Conference workshops include:

- **Adverse Childhood Experiences:** The ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experiences Study) is deep, scientific research directly linking childhood adversity to poor school performance, negative health and social outcomes. This presentation is intended to inform, inspire, and motivate actions that will better equip counselors, educators and schools to create a more effective learning environment which will help children become higher achievers and teachers be more fulfilled.
- **Native H.O.P.E a Native P.R.I.D.E. Program:** The process in the Native H.O.P.E. program intentionally creates a safe and sacred place through culture, spirituality and humor for participants to address suicide, depression, trauma, violence, and substance abuse. The Native H.O.P.E. session will provide an overview of this peer-counseling approach that has proven to be highly effective for Native youth to break the “code of silence.”
- **Improving Communication and Relationships with Families Facing the Trauma of Poverty:** Dr. Beegle grew up not knowing the words that her teachers used and not understanding the examples that were provided to explain the words. She knew she communicated differently, but it was not until she studied communication and social class and learned about the differences in communication across social class that she realized she needed a second language. She provides a highly interactive workshop offering concrete tools for building stronger relationships and communicating more effectively with families who live in the crisis of poverty.
- **Breastfeed Montana: Creating Healthy Families, Creating Healthy Communities:** The Nutrition and Physical Activity Program will describe its work with organizations around the state to further breastfeeding initiatives and lactation supports. This session will address the Montana Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, Montana State Breastfeeding Coalition, Mothers’ Milk Bank of Montana, Montana Breastfeeding law, and community partnerships.
- **Building Capacity for Cross-Cultural Advocacy:** A workplace doesn’t work unless everyone feels safe, valued or respected. This prejudice-reduction workshop will consist of a series of incremental, experiential activities that help participants celebrate their identities, recognize the misinformation they have learned, understand the personal impact of discrimination, and learn hands-on tools to interrupt prejudice comments.
- **Poverty Simulation Experience:** Understanding the day-to-day reality of poverty is important for everyone involved in fighting poverty—from policy makers to service providers. The Poverty Simulation is a unique tool that helps people begin to understand what life is like with a shortage of money and an abundance of stress.