

*Presentation to the 2021 Health and Human Services
Joint Appropriation Subcommittee*

**Director's Office
Department of Public Health and Human Services**

The following topics are covered in this report:

- Overview
- Summary of Major Functions
- Highlights and Accomplishments during the 2019 Biennium
- Funding and FTE Information
- Change Packages

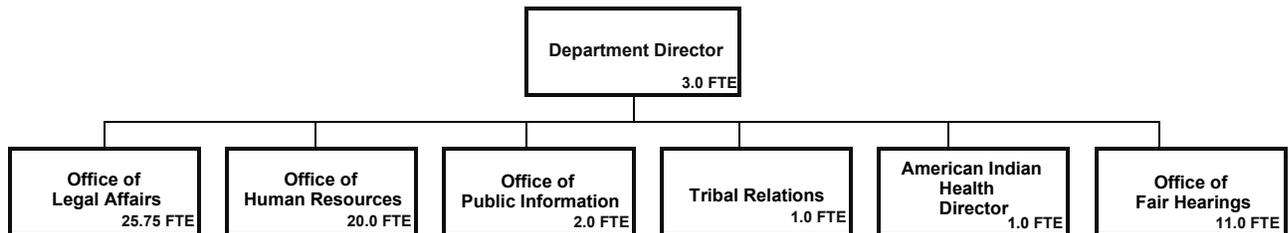
Overview

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS or Department) is the largest state agency in Montana, seeking to promote and protect the health, well-being, and self-sufficiency of all Montanans. DPHHS is organized into three branches: Medicaid and Health Services, and Economic Security Services, and Operations Services.

The DPHHS Director's Office works to ensure a cohesive and strategic approach to Department's work as a whole, and to provide key services to Montanans. The DPHHS Director's Office provides leadership, management, and oversight to the Department's three branches, which together oversee 16 divisions.

The Director's Office operates on four value statements to lead the work of the agency:

- All Montana children are healthy, safe and in permanent, loving homes.
- All Montanans have the tools and support to be as self-sufficient as possible.
- All Montanans are injury-free, healthy, and have access to quality health care.
- All Montanans can contribute to the above through community service.



Summary of Major Functions

The Director's Office is comprised of the Department Director, Deputy Director, the Office of Legal Affairs, the Human Resources Office, State Medical Officer, Chief Policy and Communications Officer, the Public Information Officer, American Indian Health Director, Tribal Relations Manager, and the Office of Fair Hearings.

Office of Legal Affairs

The Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) is the legal team for the department, providing representation and legal advice on a wide range of critical issues. OLA supports the development and implementation of the department's programs by providing quality legal services including the development of contracts; participation in beneficiary and provider hearings; conducting litigation, negotiations and settlements; administrative rule, legislation, and procedure drafting; document review; providing internal and public-facing trainings; providing advice regarding compliance with state and federal laws and regulations; and assisting with policy development.

In addition to maintaining its traditional role advising departmental clients, OLA has played an instrumental role in the State's COVID-19 response through negotiating and drafting contracts for critical supplies and services, interpreting and providing advice on federal waivers and emergency guidance, providing regulatory advice to local health departments and external stakeholders, and coordinating legal efforts with other agencies.

Human Resources Office

Office of Human Resources (OHR) is comprised of 20 staff who serve approximately 2,900 employees stretched over 40 locations across the state of Montana. The OHR develops the overall direction and utilization of human resources and related functional areas for the department. Agency strategies and objectives for staffing, workforce planning and development, pay administration, labor relations, and HR risk management are guided and directed by the OHR through executive consultation and leadership to the department

State Medical Officer

The State Medical Officer is responsible for providing leadership for statewide public health policy, program planning, and administration; providing medical direction and oversight to department and division programs to prevent and control disease, mitigate disease outbreak, and promote healthy behavior; and to provide oversight for epidemiologic and surveillance of public health-related issues.

Chief Policy and Communications Officer

The Chief Policy and Communications Officer researches, develops, recommends and implements decisions and policy for department priorities; as well as develops and leads communication strategies for policy and programmatic issues that require clear communication to individuals served by the agency, community stakeholders, legislators, and the general public. This position also assists the Director and Branch Managers with coordination of legislative activity.

Public Information Office

The Public Information Office coordinates agency media inquiries, writes and issues news releases, organizes agency press events, oversees agency social media and media campaigns, prepares talking points, fact sheets and FAQs related to agency initiatives, manages public records requests with Office of Legal Affairs, assists in managing the website, and assists with Legislator, constituent and stakeholder inquiries.

Tribal Relations Manager

The Tribal Relations Manager serves as the formal lead communicator to tribal governments, Indian Health Service, Urban Indian Health Centers and other tribal health partners in support of our government-to-government relationship. The Tribal Relations Manager provides advice and guidance internally to educate, inform and support department leadership as they integrate work with tribal communities and governments in a more formal manner within their branches and divisions. The Tribal Relations Manager provides guidance and assistance to department staff as they create and change policy, build programs that are inclusive of Tribes and learn the protocols of working with our tribal partners. The Tribal Relations Manager assists in organizing and facilitating formal tribal consultations, coordinate and finalize the annual tribal relations report to Office of the Governor as required by law.

Office of American Indian Health

The Director of American Indian Health is responsible for identifying the sources of health disparities and developing strategies for health equity, while providing a forum for addressing tribal-state health issues. Through this office, DPHHS leadership prioritizes its partnerships with tribal governments and other tribal health entities across the state to develop strategies to bring health equity and access to quality care to American Indian populations.

Office of Fair Hearings

The Office of Fair Hearings provides impartial administrative hearings for individuals or entities to appeal adverse decisions from DPHHS. Hearings officers adjudicate a wide range of department-related issues. Written decisions of this office are binding unless appealed to the state Board of Public Assistance, the Department Director, or a District Court. Some of the types of issues that are addressed include eligibility for public assistance programs; licensing and certification for entities, such as child care and day care facilities and nursing homes; decisions related to child support; ability to pay for care in state facilities; denial of admission to or discharge from state facilities and long-term care facilities; substantiation of child abuse and neglect; and eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services.

Highlights and Accomplishments during the 2021 Biennium

COVID- 19 Response

Ensured continuity of services to Montanans during the pandemic

The pandemic highlighted the need to effectively connect individuals and families to needed services and supports. DPHHS rapidly responded to ensuring the health and safety of employees across the state so they could continue to deliver critical food, shelter, health and safety.

The Human Resources Office ensured that strategic decisions took into account effects on employees and unions. As a result, DPPHS developed effective processes and controls to track and administer paid COVID-19 leave benefits for staff; establish productive staff and union communications; provide training; and reduce risk by considering effects of high-level decisions on the agency's human resources.

Provided vital support to citizens and service providers through Coronavirus Relief Fund

DPHHS awarded more than \$115 million from the Governor's Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to support Montanans through the pandemic. This financial relief was provided to those hardest-hit by the pandemic to bolster social safety-net nonprofits, reduce isolation, improve access to health coverage, ensure childcare, promote behavioral health, and enhance food security. DPHHS ensured the grant programs operated with high integrity, adhering to the guidelines of the funds and ensuring a fair and consistent approval process. The control structures balanced the need to get relief funds to recipients quickly, while minimizing the potential for fraud, waste, and abuse. The team worked closely with recipients to answer questions and conducted interim sub-recipient monitoring to identify and remedy potential issues with allowability of expenditures.

Increased access to public health information

The COVID-19 public health emergency necessitated a new, rapid way of communicating information about the pandemic to the public. To ensure Montanans had access to up-to-date, transparent information about the pandemic, DPHHS launched a website, helpline phone number and email address for Montanans to ask questions and receive information about COVID-19. DPHHS staffed the helplines and returned calls and emails within 24 hours to Montanans to ensure a timely response with accurate information. The PIO continues to manage this resource in collaboration with the state's Joint Information Center. To date, over 10,000 calls and emails have been responded to from the news media and the public since March 2020.

Specific to media calls, the pandemic has vastly increased the number of inquiries to DPHHS. In 2019, DPHHS responded to about 300 media inquiries; in 2020 those inquiries increased to over 1,000 media inquiries from both national and state news media representatives, mostly related to COVID-19. The Public Information Office continues to experience an enormous increase in inquiries due to COVID-19.

Supported Tribal response to the COVID-19

Through the Tribal Relations Manager, DPHHS led the outreach efforts to tribal governments to facilitate and schedule COVID-19 community testing. In a 35-day period, all eight tribal governments held community testing events, testing several thousand members as they worked to reduce virus transmission across their respective reservation. The Tribal Relations Manager

also facilitated communication and input from tribal governments and Indian Health Service regarding COVID-19 vaccine allocation to Native Americans across Montana.

Improved operational efficiencies in the Office of Fair Hearings

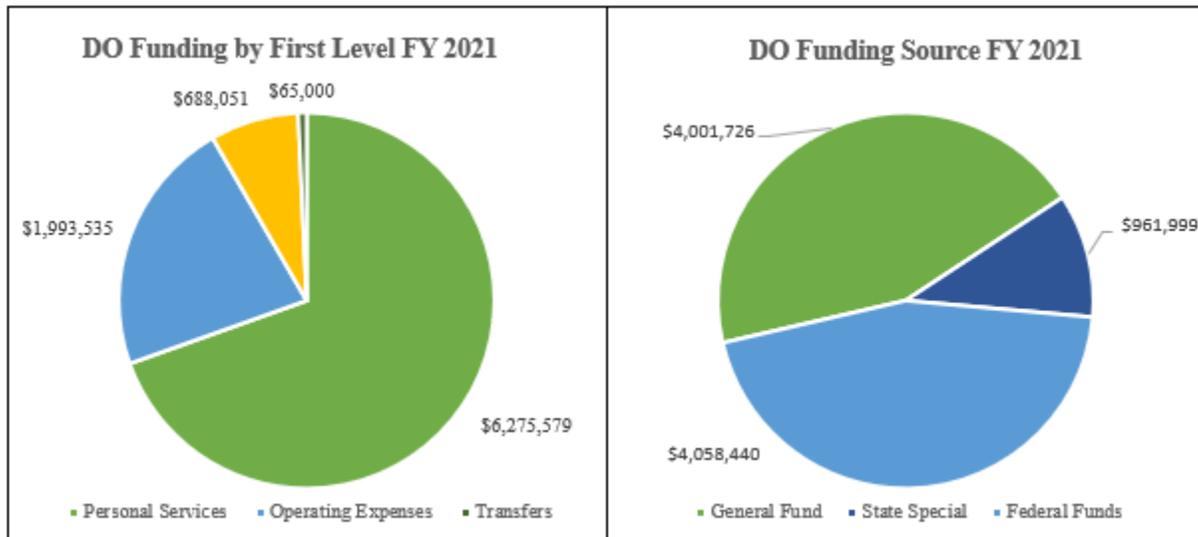
The Office of Fair Hearings eliminated backlog of public assistance cases; completed the consolidation with the Child Support Enforcement Division hearing officers by co-locating all staff within one office; initiated transition to electronic case and records management system; commenced cross training of all support staff and administrative law judges to allow for greater flexibility and adaptability; conducted a comprehensive review of the department’s rules related to hearings with the goal of simplifying and clarifying the process and consolidating rules.

Conducted trauma-informed training

Coordinated the delivery of trauma-informed trainings for DPHHS employees, ensuring that these trainings address historical trauma and encouraged program-based interventions to incorporate trauma-informed and culturally appropriate practices.

Funding & FTE Information

Director's Office	FY 2021 Budget	FY 2022 Request	FY 2023 Request
FTE	64.75	63.75	63.75
Personal Services	\$ 6,275,579	\$ 5,941,690	\$ 6,064,195
Operating Expenses	\$ 1,993,535	\$ 1,180,876	\$ 1,181,216
Grants	\$ 688,051	\$ 688,051	\$ 688,051
Transfers	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000
TOTAL COSTS	\$ 9,022,165	\$ 7,875,617	\$ 7,998,462
	FY 2021 Budget	FY 2022 Request	FY 2023 Request
General Fund	\$ 4,001,726	\$ 3,426,135	\$ 3,539,998
State Special	\$ 961,999	\$ 453,513	\$ 454,771
Federal Funds	\$ 4,058,440	\$ 3,995,969	\$ 4,003,693
TOTAL Funds	\$ 9,022,165	\$ 7,875,617	\$ 7,998,462



Change Packages

Present Law Adjustments:

SWPL – 1 – Personal Services

The budget includes a decrease of \$139,916 total funds in FY 2022 and \$122,296 total funds in FY 2023 to annualize various personal services costs including FY 2021 statewide pay plan, benefit rate adjustments, longevity adjustments related to incumbents in each position at the time of the snapshot, and vacancy savings.

	General Fund	State Special	Federal Funds	Total Request
FY 2022	(\$69,951)	(\$8,347)	(\$61,618)	(\$139,916)
FY 2023	(\$61,143)	(\$7,113)	(\$54,040)	(\$122,296)
Biennium Total	(\$131,094)	(\$15,460)	(\$115,658)	(\$262,212)

SWPL – 2 – Fixed Costs

Fixed costs are fees charged to agencies for a variety of services provided by other state agencies. The executive requests adjustments in fixed costs. Examples include: warrant writer, motor pool, etc. The rates charged for these services are approved in the section of the budget that provides the services.

	General Fund	State Special	Federal Funds	Total Request
FY 2022	(\$244)	(\$34)	(\$209)	(\$487)
FY 2023	(\$353)	(\$49)	(\$304)	(\$706)
Biennium Total	(\$597)	(\$83)	(\$513)	(\$1,193)

SWPL – 3 – Inflation/Deflation

The executive requests adjustments to reflect budgetary changes generated from the application of inflation and deflation factors to specific expenditure accounts. Affected accounts include food, postage, gasoline, and others.

	General Fund	State Special	Federal Funds	Total Request
FY 2022	(\$749)	(\$105)	(\$644)	(\$1,498)
FY 2023	(\$470)	(\$66)	(\$403)	(\$939)
Biennium Total	(\$1,219)	(\$171)	(\$1,047)	(\$2,437)

New Proposals:

NP – 33004 – Transfer Suicide Prevention Program from DO to AMDD

The executive proposes to transfer the current suicide prevention budget in the Director's Office to the Addictive and Mental Disorders Division. The request moves the FY 2021 appropriation of \$800,117 in general fund and \$1,000,000 in state special revenue to AMDD in FY 2022 and FY 2023.

	General Fund	State Special	Federal Funds	Total Request
FY 2022	(\$400,355)	(\$500,000)	\$0	(\$900,355)
FY 2023	(\$399,762)	(\$500,000)	\$0	(\$899,762)
Biennium Total	(\$800,117)	(\$1,000,000)	\$0	(\$1,800,117)

NP – 5555 – Reduce GF Budget for State Share Holiday-

Governor Gianforte has proposed legislation to impose a two-month state share holiday for employer contributions into the state health insurance fund. This change package removes the general fund portion of the savings generate by the contribution holiday. Savings from other funding sources will remain in the agency to be able to address ongoing functions of the agency. This change package is contingent on passage and approval of the proposed legislation.

	General Fund	State Special	Federal Funds	Total Request
FY 2022	(\$104,292)	\$0	\$0	(\$104,292)
FY 2023	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Biennium Total	(\$104,292)	\$0	\$0	(\$104,292)