

# Montana Health Care Programs MESSENGER

## Corona Virus / COVID-19 in Montana

In recent weeks, across Montana, the number of new cases of COVID is slowing. This is good news and means that the sacrifices made by Montanans are working! When we stayed at home, stopped gathering in large groups, and closed our businesses and schools, we slowed the spread of COVID. Fewer new cases are a large part of the reason that Governor Bullock decided to begin slowly reopening Montana.

### Can I have a big party to celebrate?

Unfortunately, no. There are still people sick with COVID in our state and that means that the disease can still be transmitted and make others sick too. As of May 22, 2020, there were 479 laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19, with a total of 65 hospitalizations, and 16 deaths. In addition, 441 of these individuals have recovered, and there are three active hospitalizations.

This is a serious illness and the public health department says that since the virus spreads from person to person, you should continue to avoid close contact with other people. Following public health safety recommendations are very important if you are older, have heart or lung disease, or diabetes because those people are at a greater risk of serious illness.

### Tips to stay safe:

- Wash your hands often – wash with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer
- Avoid close contact – even if you are walking in a park or at the grocery store try to stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering – wear a mask when you are in public, like at the grocery store. Children under 2 should NOT wear face masks.
- Cover coughs and sneezes – always wash your hand after
- Clean and disinfect surfaces daily – including doorknobs, light switches, phones, handles, counters, sinks and faucets.

For more information: <https://covid19.mt.gov/>



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### Helping Loved Ones at Risk

Do you have a loved one being cared for at home by a caregiver or in a care facility? Everyone should honor the established guidelines on who can come and go. You can help others by frequently asking about the health of your loved one and knowing the plan if there is an outbreak. Ask what you can do to help and support the caregivers. Call and talk with your loved one, video chat with them if possible. If your loved ones live alone, check on them frequently and try to identify what services they may need like: medical attention, food, medication, etc. Contact Adult Protective Services at [www.aps.mt.gov](http://www.aps.mt.gov) they will help connect you to your local resources such as the Area Agency on Aging to find resources for your loved ones.



## Scams Related to COVID-19: Protect Yourself from More than the Virus

### • Social Security Scams

**SCAM:** Caller claims to be from Social Security and says that the outbreak has forced a reorganization of their records. They want to confirm your personally identifiable information, like your Social Security number.

- Social Security will never call you! If you aren't sure that a caller is legitimate, hang up and look up the number of the organization they claim to represent. If they really work there, you'll be able to get right back on the line with them.

### • Medicare/Medicaid Scams

**SCAM:** Caller claims to be from Medicare/Medicaid. They may claim that the recent outbreak has forced reorganization, or that COVID related claims have been charged to your account, or that Medicare is issuing some type of memo that they need personal information for.

- Medicare/Medicaid will not call you. If you aren't sure whether a caller is legitimate, hang up and look up the number of the organization they claim to represent. If they really work there, you'll be able to get right back on the line with them.
- Report all Medicaid scams to: Medicaid member/client fraud – 800-201-6308, Medicaid provider fraud – 800-376-1115, or visit: [Montana Healthcare Programs Fraud and Abuse](#).

### • Fraudulent Cures/Vaccines/Treatments

**SCAM:** Individuals trying to pedal fake cures or treatments.

If anyone contacts you, or you see any advertisement for a Corona virus cure, treatment, or vaccine, it is a scam! The FDA must approve of any new treatment/cure/vaccine, and it will be offered by legitimate medical facilities, not sold over TV or computer ads, or marketed by door-to-door salespeople.

### • Price Gouging

**SCAM:** Scammers have, or pretend to have, a supply of some type of commodity (safety masks, toilet paper, disinfectant wipes, cleaning supplies, etc.) and will be selling it at an inflated price. Sometimes these scammers offer their product in local classified ads or go door-to-door to sell them.

- If anyone other than a licensed retailer is selling a product, don't trust it! They could be selling a knock-off, a dangerous product, or they may not even have the product to begin with.

**If you think you have been a victim of a scam, contact the Legal Services Developer Program (1-800-332-2272), Adult Protective Services (1-844-277-9300), and/or Office of Consumer Protection (1-800-481-6896).**

## Telemedicine: From the Children's Mental Health Bureau

Medicaid provides services to youth and families through several different programs including the **Children's Mental Health Bureau**. Most of these services have been provided face-to-face, but since the COVID-19 state of emergency, things have changed.

Temporarily, these outpatient services listed below may be provided through telemedicine/telehealth:

- Comprehensive School and Community Treatment Services (CSCT)
- Community Based Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (CBPRS)
- Home Support Services / Therapeutic Foster Care (HSS/TFC)
- Targeted Case Management – Youth with Serious Emotional Disturbances

The service may feel different when you're used to being face-to-face. Telemedicine/telehealth is a safe and valuable tool, and the providers will still be there to support you.

These temporary changes will remain in effect from March 20, 2020 throughout the state of emergency declared in Governor Bullock's Executive Order 2-2020.



# Depressed? Here's Hope, and Help

Everyone gets “down” or “blue” sometimes. Maybe it’s a break-up, or loss of a pet. Perhaps it’s a money issue keeping you from taking time off. It could just be a “bad day” when nothing goes right. But if you’re feeling sad *for more than two weeks*, it could mean that you’re having a Major Depressive Episode or MDE.

Depression is more common than you think. Almost one in five American adults live with mental illness, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. A 2020 Mental Health America survey says that over 45.6 million adults (18.57 percent) in the U.S. experienced mental illness just last year, and a little over 13 percent of youths age 12 to 17 suffered from an MDE. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) most recent report (2018) cites a 25.4 percent increase in suicide rates across the country. Rural areas, especially, are seeing a rapid increase in suicide, says a study from the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA). Montana currently ranks at number two for suicide in the nation, and teen suicide alone has increased in the state by 26 percent in the past three years.

No two people have the same risk factors or suffer depression in the same way. Someone might have a personal or family history of depression that already exists. Others might experience a major life change, trauma, or stress (like a big move or bad accident) that “triggers” depression. Certain medications have side effects that can include depression. A physical illness could also make you prone to feeling depressed.

**Talk to a doctor if you can’t shake off these actions or feelings after two weeks:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anxious, “empty,” bad, or sad</li><li>• Body aches/pains that don’t get better</li><li>• Can’t focus, or can’t make decisions</li><li>• Can’t sleep</li><li>• Crabby, guilty, helpless, or hopeless</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don’t care about things you use to enjoy</li><li>• Don’t feel like eating/other stomach issues</li><li>• Don’t like yourself</li><li>• Gain or lose weight fast</li><li>• Tired or no energy</li><li>• Trouble sitting still</li><li>• Want to harm yourself or others*</li></ul>
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**\*Call 9-1-1, or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK (8255) or go to the hospital.**

You can get screened for depression. If you’re depressed, it can be treated *and* managed. Talking to someone – one-on-one *or* in a group – helps. Your doctor may also want you to take medication. Be active. Get support from those who love you. Take small steps. *Stay positive!* The [Montana Department of Health and Human Services](#), along with [NAMI Montana](#), the state’s chapter of the National Alliance on Mental offer education, resources, and support.

Sources include: [The CDC](#), [MT DPHHS](#), [Montana State University](#) and the [National Institute of Mental Health](#).

## Key Contacts

### Medicaid/HMK Plus Member Help Line

For questions regarding benefits copayments, or Passport to Health: **1-800-362-8312**

[MT Healthcare Programs](#)

### Nurse First Advice Line

For questions when you are sick, hurt, or have health questions.

**1-800-330-7847**

[MT NurseFirst](#)

### Montana Relay Service

For the deaf or hard of hearing.

**1-800-253-4091 or 711**

### Montana Public Assistance Help Line

For eligibility questions.

**1-888-706-1535**

[MT Public Assistance](#)

### Transportation Center

For questions regarding travel or approval. **Call before you travel, or you may not be reimbursed.**

**1-800-292-7114.**