

# Montana Health Care Programs MESSENGER

## Perinatal Mental Health

Perinatal is defined as the time during pregnancy, labor, and up to one year after childbirth. Perinatal mental health conditions are the most common complications of pregnancy and childbirth, **affecting 1 in 5 moms** (800,000 women each year in the United States)<sup>1-3</sup> and **1 in 10 dads** will suffer from postpartum (after childbirth) depression or anxiety.<sup>4</sup> Seventy-five percent of women who experience perinatal mental health symptoms **go untreated**.<sup>5</sup> **Pregnant and postpartum people will see a frontline healthcare provider** (obstetric, pediatric, or primary care provider) **20-25 times** during a routine pregnancy and first year of baby's life. This provides opportunities for healthcare providers to discuss and screen for maternal mental health (MMH) conditions.<sup>6</sup> Montana Medicaid is excited to announce **THREE** resources dedicated to supporting parental mental health in Montana.

### 1) PRISM for Moms psychiatric teleconsultation line

**PRISM for Moms** is a psychiatric consultation service for Montana-based healthcare providers caring for patients during pregnancy or the postpartum (after childbirth) period. Providers are welcome to use this service to discuss psychiatric diagnosis and treatment options for people who are pregnant or who are in the postpartum period (up to three years after childbirth). **If you are a parent, mom, or dad, struggling with any mental health concerns, we encourage you to talk to your provider about calling PRISM for Moms.** This is a free resource that your provider can access to ensure that your needs are met.

Our goal is to support healthcare professionals in Montana who are doing their best to provide mental health care to their patients during pregnancy and during the postpartum period. While PRISM for Moms staff cannot provide direct treatment, this program can support providers as they manage their patient's mental health and substance use



## In this Issue

Perinatal Mental Health .....	1
<b>ANNOUNCEMENT</b> .....	1
<b>Developmental Disabilities Program Partners with Family 2 Family</b> .....	2
<b>Looking for Help with Home Heating and Water Expenses?</b> .....	3
<b>Montana Legal Services Developer Program</b> ....	3
<b>Key Contacts</b> .....	6

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Beginning April 1, 2022, the **Nurse First Advice Line** will no longer be available. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your health, please contact your primary care provider. If it is an emergency, dial 911.

disorders and will assist with treatment referrals when necessary. PRISM for Moms may offer a **free, one-time patient evaluation** on a case-by-case basis.

Link to [PRISM](#) for Moms.

## 2) LIFTS Guide by Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies—The Montana Coalition

In 1984, a group of health professionals created [Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies—The Montana Coalition \(HMHB-MT\)](#), based on the national Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies model, to improve the health of mothers and children in Montana. There is a new online resource guide for families to use called [LIFTS Guide, Linking Infants and Families to Supports.](#) The LIFTS guide was created for Montana families who are expecting or raising young ones, to link to supports, resources, and other families. There are several ways to connect and find the information you need. Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies hopes that their new LIFTS guide will become a reliable tool on your parenthood journey, to help you find what you need, when you need it. None of us were ever meant to do this on our own.

In the LIFTS guide, you will find detailed information on services, including contact information and locations, as well as family friendly events in your area. It's completely searchable!

## 3) Warmline by Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies, the Montana Coalition

In addition to the LIFTS guide, HMHB-MT has restarted their [warmline](#) telephone service, with the support of grant funding from the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS). If you can't find what you need in the LIFTS guide or would like HMHB staff to help you, the anonymous warmline telephone number that you can call is [406-430-9100](#).

HMHB staff will be answering calls between 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday. If you call after hours, leave a message and we'll return your call within 1 - 2 business days.

### CITATIONS

[1] ACOG Committee Opinion 757 (2018).

[2] Gavin (2005). *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 106, 1071-83.

[3] Fawcett (2019). *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* (80)

[4] Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance. (2021). *FACT SHEET Dads and Depression*, 1.

[5] Byatt (2015). *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 126(5): 1048-1058.

[6] Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance. (2020). *FACT SHEET Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs*, 1.



## Developmental Disabilities Program Partners with Family 2 Family

The Montana **Family 2 Family Health Information Center (MT F2F)** is housed in the [Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities \(RIIC\)](#) on the University of Montana campus. The MT F2F is a parent-led organization that helps Montanans locate providers and find and understand state resources. They help families identify community supports and network with each other. They also provide presentations to support groups and providers on topics of interest.

The Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) has partnered with the MT F2F to plan and participate in quarterly meetings called **Partnering our Programs (PoP)**. PoP allows the DDP and other

# Looking for Help with Home Heating and Water Expenses?

Do you need help with home heating and water bills? The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) has two programs you should know about.



## ➤ **Help with Home Heating Bills**

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), together with Governor Greg Gianforte announce that \$27 million in federal funding is available to help Montanans with heating bills this winter and to weatherize more homes.

“With inflation at a high not seen in a generation and home heating prices continuing to increase, Montanans shouldn’t have to choose between heating their home and putting food on the table,” Governor Gianforte said. “Winter months can be challenging, and these programs are meant to help eligible Montanans keep their homes warm.”

In October, the federal government projected home heating bills will skyrocket by as much as 54 percent compared to last winter. In the last year, inflation has driven up the price of fuel oil by 59 percent, propane and firewood by 35 percent, and utility gas by 28 percent.

Additional funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) and Weatherization programs are available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Based on the recommendations from Montana’s ARPA Health Advisory Commission, Governor Gianforte devoted \$27 million for the new program on June 28, 2021.

Eligible Montanans can find LIHEAP application information at [liheap.mt.gov](https://liheap.mt.gov).

programs to share information and discuss topics of interest to DDP service recipients and their families. So far, programs to share information and discuss topics of interest to DDP service recipients and their families. So far, we have held two PoP meetings and have covered information on the DDP organization, DDP services and DDP eligibility.

DDP is excited about this partnership and looks forward to working with the MT F2F to share and exchange information with service recipients and their families. If you would like more information on MT F2F or the PoP series, please email [montanaf2f@umt.edu](mailto:montanaf2f@umt.edu).

## **Montana Legal Services Developer Program**

The Legal Services Developer Program (LSDP) is a division of the Aging Services Bureau at the Department of Public Health and Human Services. The LSDP offers a free **legal advice hotline** for advice on civil (though not criminal) matters. This includes issues concerning:

About \$14 million in funding will be used to increase heat assistance payments for the lowest income households with the highest energy burden. Special populations such as the elderly, disabled, or households with young children are also considered for this funding.

LIHEAP is a federally-funded program that already provides \$21 million annually to Montana to reduce the home energy burden for low-income households. DPHHS works to ensure that households with the lowest income and highest energy burden receive the greatest level of assistance. Payments are made directly to energy providers.

The ARPA funds temporarily supplement the existing LIHEAP program and provide an increase in benefits to households that could benefit from these funds the most.

A portion of the funds will pay for a new, temporary benefit, to pay for past utility bills owed and emergency payments for reconnection fees or to stop service disconnects. The increase in payments will only apply for the 2021-22 LIHEAP season.

On average, about 18,500 Montanan households are enrolled in LIHEAP statewide, and 460 homes are weatherized each year.

The \$6 million allocation to the Weatherization Program will reduce energy costs for additional households by increasing energy efficiency in homes. DPHHS officials say these investments have long-term impacts, and the estimated annual savings to each home receiving weatherization services is about \$409.

For more information about this funding opportunity and all ARPA funding allocated to DPHHS go to [arpa.mt.gov](https://arpa.mt.gov).

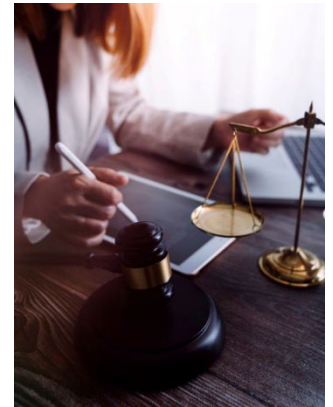
### ➤ **Help with Water Expenses**

Montana DPHHS, together with Governor Greg Gianforte, announce a new, statewide \$3.8 million program to help eligible Montanans pay for water and wastewater expenses.

“This program will go a long way to help ensure Montanans maintain access to water at their home, without worrying about disruptions to service,” Gov. Gianforte said.

Data gathered from the larger cities across the state indicate that many households are 60 or more days past due with amounts ranging anywhere from \$50 to \$1,000.

- Housing;
- Debt collection;
- Financial exploitation;
- and more.



This resource is available to Montana residents over the age of 60, and adults with a disability Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM.

The LSDP also provides free **estate planning phone clinics** for those wishing to complete estate planning documents. The phone clinic program allows Montana residents to complete these documents from the comfort of their own home with the help of trained legal professionals. The program allows participants to ask lots of questions and receive information about their individual situation.

For those who prefer face-to-face assistance drafting these documents, the program hosts several **in-person estate planning**

Gianforte said the funds will allow the state to provide some relief in the monthly costs related to home drinking water and wastewater costs for eligible households.

DPHHS Director Adam Meier added, "The program addresses an important need in our state. We believe it's going to make a big difference, and we're excited to offer this opportunity."

The funding is available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Based on the recommendations from Montana's ARPA Health Advisory Commission.

Gov. Gianforte devoted \$1.68 million for the new program on June 28, 2021. An additional \$2.1 million dollars is allocated to the program through the Consolidated Appropriations Act.

To prepare for the new program rollout, DPHHS changed its eligibility system and only recently received federal guidance regarding program eligibility. Now that those pieces are in place, the agency is coordinating the rollout of this program with the existing Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Meier said DPHHS has made it easy for Montanans to apply by creating one application for both LIHWAP, and LIHEAP and Weatherization programs.

The statewide network of Human Resource Development Councils will receive and approve applications for LIHWAP. DPHHS has entered into vendor agreements with nearly 100 public water system operators across the state to initiate payments. DPHHS continues outreach to encourage other public water system providers to participate in the program. Water system providers may elect to participate in the program at any time.

To qualify for LIHWAP assistance, Montanans must meet these requirements:

- Be the person responsible for paying water and/or wastewater (sewer) bill.
- Have an active water and/or wastewater (sewer) account or have an obligation to pay through a rental agreement.
- Be a United States citizen or legally admitted for permanent residency.

Households must also be connected to a public water system, private wells and septic systems are not included.

Applicants are required to meet income and resource guidelines. For example, a family of four with an income of

**clinics** across the state. The schedule for these in-person clinics is announced in January every year and can be found on the [LSDP website](#). Both the phone and in-person estate planning clinics are available to tribal members of any age. These clinics address the following important documents:

- Wills;
- Financial and Healthcare Powers of Attorney;
- Declaration of Living Will;
- Declaration of Homestead; and
- Transfer on Death Deeds.

The LSDP also provides **elder law training and resources** for older adults, family members, and social outreach workers. Previous training webinars have covered a variety of issues, such as:

- Public housing;
- Social Security; and
- Guardianships.

Upcoming trainings will cover topics such as:

- Medicaid and Medicare;
- Public benefits; and
- The importance of preparing estate planning documents.

less than \$52,465 per year is eligible.

To apply for assistance, Montanans can submit a combined LIHWAP and LIHEAP application. An application can be found at [liheap.mt.gov](http://liheap.mt.gov) or by contacting the local LIHEAP eligibility office. A list of LIHEAP offices is here [Energy Assistance \(mt.gov\)](#).

Applicants needing assistance to complete an application may call 1-833-317-1080.

For more information on what the Legal Services Developer Program offers, you can visit the [LSDP website](#) or contact the Legal Services Developer, Katy Lovell, toll-free at **(800) 322-2272**.

## 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 NURSE FIRST](#)

**\*This service ending 4/1/2022**

### **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.**