

Montana Healthcare Programs MESSENGER

Medicaid Expansion – House Reconciliation Bill and Montana Health and Economic Livelihood Partnership (HELP) Changes

House Reconciliation Bill (H.R. 1)

On July 4, 2025, a new law called the House Reconciliation bill (H.R. 1), also known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act,” became law. This law made changes to the Medicaid Expansion program.

H.R. 1 is a federal law that affects how Medicaid is paid for and how some people qualify for coverage. It is sometimes called the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” because it combines many health care and budget changes into one large law. Some of these changes affect adults who get Medicaid Expansion.

Starting in July 2026, H.R. 1 will change how some Montanans apply for Medicaid and keep their coverage. Most of these changes affect adults in Medicaid Expansion. The goal is to increase how often eligibility is checked and to help people stay responsible for keeping their coverage.

More details, including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) are available at the following webpage:
<https://dphhs.mt.gov/medicaidchanges/>.

Montana HELP Changes

To keep Medicaid Expansion coverage, most adults must meet monthly community engagement requirements. These rules apply to everyone in Medicaid Expansion unless they qualify for an exemption.

In this Issue

Medicaid Expansion – House Reconciliation Bill and Montana Health and Economic Livelihood Partnership (HELP) Changes	1
Primary Care Montana: An Easier Way to Get Care ...	2
Dental Cleanings to Protect Your Health	2
Medicaid Enrollment for Ordering, Referring, and Prescribing Providers	2
Primary Care Montana: An Easier Way to Get Care Continued.....	3
Raising the Age, Raising Awareness: The Impact of Tobacco 21	3
Blood Pressure Toolkits Available at 25 Montana Libraries	3
Making Life Easier with Big Sky Waiver.....	4
Blood Pressure Toolkits Available at 25 Montana Libraries Continued	4
SDMI Medicaid Waiver: Your Right to Privacy in Your Home	5
Blood Pressure Toolkits Available at 25 Montana Libraries Continued	5
Arthritis: Learn and Take Action in Montana	6
Key Contacts	6

Primary Care Montana: An Easier Way to Get Care



Starting July 1, 2026, Montana Medicaid will begin a new primary care program called Primary Care Montana (PCMT), and the Passport to Health program will end. PCMT's goal is to make getting care easier, help you understand your choices, and give you support when you need it.

PCMT removes extra steps so you can get care fast with more support. You still make decisions about your health. A care team is there to help with questions, planning, and coordination. The program is designed for people across Montana, no matter where they live.

What does this mean for you?

- You can keep your current provider or change at any time
- You will have a care team to help you when needed
- You will spend less time trying to understand how the system works

With PCMT:

- You and your provider decide together what care is best
- A care team will help manage your care, including setting up appointments and follow-up visits
- Less guessing about what to do
- Fewer barriers to care
- More help when you need it
- More choices in where you go
- Support while you stay in control of your care

Before (Passport to Health)

- Referrals required an ID number from your primary care provider to get the care
- More steps to get care
- You did most of the work to manage your care

Many clinics will offer:

- Same-day appointments for urgent needs
- Help by phone or online
- Support to keep up with checkups, tests, and medications

Dental Cleanings to Protect Your Health

Regular dental cleanings do more than keep a healthy smile. They are important in preventing more serious health issues like heart disease.

Regular dental cleaning is one of the easiest ways to protect your health. When plaque and tartar are not removed regularly, they can cause gum disease, tooth decay, and tooth loss. Routine dental care may also help lower the risks of heart disease, problems from diabetes, lung infections, and vitamin shortages.

Medicaid Enrollment for Ordering, Referring, and Prescribing Providers

Federal regulation, 42 C.F.R. 455.410, requires all providers who order, refer, or prescribe (ORP) services for Montana Healthcare Program (Medicaid) members to be signed up with Medicaid. This is required even if they do not bill Medicaid for the services. They can continue to provide services for enrolled members without billing.

If your doctor has not signed up with Montana Medicaid, and orders or refers you for services, tests, or supplies, these are not covered, and claims may not be paid.

Primary Care Montana: An Easier Way to Get Care Continued

Most members don't need to do anything when this change occurs. If you want to stay with your current provider, you can. To choose a new provider or check if your provider is part of PCMT, call the Medicaid/HMK *Plus* Help Line at (800) 362-8312 or (800) 253-4091 (TDD). Representatives are available Monday through Friday, 8:00a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

More information will be in the updated Montana Medicaid Member Guide after July 1, 2026. You can ask the Help Line for a printed copy or go online to

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/MontanaHealthcarePrograms/>.

Raising the Age, Raising Awareness: The Impact of Tobacco 21

In December 2019, a law called Tobacco 21 (T21) started. This law says stores cannot sell cigarettes, e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches, cigars, chew, hookah, or any tobacco products to people under 21 years old. There are no exceptions. The goal is to help keep young people from getting addicted to nicotine.

Most adults who smoke started before age 21. Many start when they are teenagers. Their brains are still growing, and nicotine can harm the brain. It can also make it harder to quit later. T21 makes it harder for teens to get tobacco.

Some communities are targeted more by tobacco companies. These companies use ads, signs, and special deals in areas with lower income or where many people use Medicaid. This can lead to higher smoking rates and more illness. T21 helps protect young people in all communities.

If you or someone you know uses tobacco or nicotine, it is not too late to quit. Quit Now Montana offers free help. Call (800) QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669) or visit <https://quitnowmontana.com/>. You don't have to quit alone.



Blood Pressure Toolkits Available at 25 Montana Libraries

DPHHS and the State Library have started a new program. It is called the Library Blood Pressure Toolkit program. This program helps people check their blood pressure at home.

Montanans can borrow a toolkit for free at 25 libraries in Montana. It works like checking out a book. Each kit has an automated blood pressure cuff, a step counter, a book to write down your numbers, and a list of local health resources.

High blood pressure (hypertension) can cause serious health problems, like heart disease and stroke. Checking your blood pressure at home can help you and your doctor understand your health.



Making Life Easier with Big Sky Waiver

Everyone should feel safe at home and in their community. The Big Sky Waiver (BSW) helps people do this. It gives services that help people live on their own.

BSW can help make homes and vehicles safer. For example, if someone needs a ramp to get into their home, BSW may help pay for it. BSW can also help change vehicles. This may include hand controls or a ramp for a wheelchair. These changes help people travel safely. BSW gives many kinds of help so people can live well in their community. Other services can include:

Health and Therapy

- Nursing, Physical, Occupational, Speech, and Respiratory Therapies
- Dietetic and Nutritional Services
- Pain and Symptom Management
- Specialized Medical Equipment and Supplies

Daily Living and Personal Care

- Personal Assistance and Attendants
- Homemaker and Chore Services
- Adult Day Health
- Adult Foster Care
- Assisted Living
- Case Management

Community and Social Support

- Community Adult Group Homes
- Supported Employment
- Community Transition Services
- Service Animals

Safety and Accessibility

- Emergency Response Systems
- Home Modifications
- Vehicle Modifications

Family and Caregiver Support

- Respite Care
- Family Training and Support
- Financial Management and Self-Direction

To make a referral to BSW, contact Mountain Pacific at (800) 219-7035. To determine Medicaid eligibility, speak with a specialist at your local Office of Public Assistance, or contact the Montana Public Assistance Helpline at (888) 706-1535.

To find more information about BSW services, please visit <https://dphhs.mt.gov/sltc/csb/BSW/BigSkyWaiverProgram>.

Blood Pressure Toolkits Available at 25 Montana Libraries Continued

The toolkits are available for checkout at these local libraries:

- Aaniiih Nakoda College Library, Harlem
- Belgrade Community Library, Belgrade
- Blaine County Library, Chinook
- Butte-Silver Bow Public Library, Butte
- Chouteau County Library, Fort Benton
- Glacier County Library, Cut Bank
- Great Falls Public Library, Great Falls
- Harlowton Public Library, Harlowton
- Hearst Free Library, Anaconda
- Lewis & Clark Library, Helena
- Lewis and Clark Library Lincoln Branch, Lincoln
- Lewistown Public Library, Lewistown
- Meagher County/City Library, White Sulphur Springs
- Medicine Spring Library, Browning
- Mineral County Public Library, Superior
- North Lake County Public Library, Polson
- North Valley Public Library, Stevensville
- Phillips County Library, Malta

SDMI Medicaid Waiver: Your Right to Privacy in Your Home

In a previous article, we shared information about the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule. This rule helps make sure people receiving HCBS services have the same rights and freedoms as others in their community.

One important part of the HCBS Settings Rule says people receiving services have the right to privacy in their home or living space.

What does privacy mean?

If you receive Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), you have the right to privacy in your living space. Your room or living unit is your home, and your privacy should be respected by the people who provide services and support to you. This space should feel safe, comfortable, and private for you.

What is a living or sleeping unit?

A sleeping or living unit is the space where you live. This may include:

- Your bedroom
- Your apartment
- Your personal living area in a shared home or assisted living setting

What does privacy look like?

Privacy means that people respect your personal space and your personal life. Examples of privacy include:

- Staff should knock before entering your room or living space
- You should be able to have private phone calls
- You should be able to meet with visitors in private
- Your personal belongings should be respected
- Your personal information should be kept confidential

How should providers respect your privacy?

The people who provide your services should treat your home with respect. They should:

- Knock and wait before entering your room
- Respect your personal space and belongings
- Allow you to have private conversations
- Protect your personal information

What if you feel your privacy is not being respected?

If you feel your privacy is not being respected, you should talk to your HCBS case manager. Your case manager can help make sure your services support your rights, dignity, and privacy.

Blood Pressure Toolkits Available at 25 Montana Libraries Continued

- Philipsburg Area Community Library, Philipsburg
- Red Lodge Carnegie Library, Red Lodge
- Rosebud County Library, Forsyth
- Thompson Falls Public Library, Thompson Falls
- Westshore Library, Lakeside
- Whitefish Community Library, Whitefish
- William K. Kohrs Memorial Library, Deer Lodge

For more information, contact Crystelle Fogle with the Montana Cardiovascular Health Program at cfogle@mt.gov.



Arthritis: Learn and Take Action in Montana

May is National Arthritis Awareness Month. This month helps us learn about arthritis. Arthritis affects millions of people. It is not a top cause of death, but it is the main cause of pain and disability. It can make daily tasks hard.

What is arthritis?

Arthritis causes pain, swelling, and stiffness in your joints. There are more than 100 types of arthritis. It can affect people of any age, race, or gender. Arthritis is a major cause of disability. The pain and limited movement can make it hard to do chores or work. In Montana, two out of five adults with arthritis say it affects their work or stops them from working.

Arthritis in Montana

In Montana, more than one in four adults (28 percent) have arthritis. This is higher than the national average of 25 percent. This shows the need for more awareness and action in our state.

Managing Arthritis

There are ways to help manage arthritis and feel better. Here are some tips:

- Move your body: Gentle activities like walking, swimming, or biking can help reduce pain.
- Talk to your doctor: If you think you may have arthritis, see a doctor for answers and treatment
- Keep a healthy weight: Eating healthy foods and staying at a good weight helps reduce stress on joints.
- Give your joints a break: Sitting or standing too long can make joints stiff. Try to switch positions and stretch during the day.

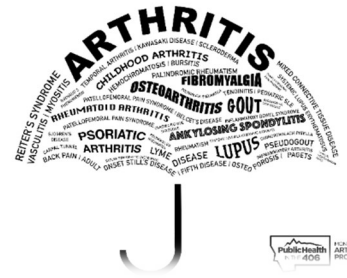
Arthritis Classes

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) supports classes that help people manage arthritis, such as:

- Stay Active & Independent for Life (SAIL)
- Tai Chi for Arthritis & Falls Prevention
- Walk with Ease

To learn more, visit the Montana Arthritis Program website at: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/arthritis> or call (844) 684-5848. Let's work together to spread awareness and help people with arthritis live easier, healthier lives!

Arthritis is an umbrella term, covering over 100 types of joint conditions.



Key Contacts

Montana Health Care Programs/Medicaid/HMK Plus Member Help Line

For questions regarding benefits or Passport to Health:

1-800-362-8312

MT Health Care Programs

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:

1-800-292-7114.

Call before you travel, or you may not be reimbursed.