

August 8, 2007

Greetings:

In response to Senate Joint Resolution 7 from the 2007 Montana Legislature's regular session, the Department of Public Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice are working together to address the issue of criminal background checks for direct care workers. The Departments are forming an affected parties and stakeholder workgroup of 15 members to discuss and make recommendations on the following topics:

- Identify and define all programs or services that are provided, funded, or regulated by DPHHS where criminal background checks should be required.
- Define "Direct Care Workers."
- Outline and discuss a process for individuals or providers to complete criminal background checks.
- Discuss and identify a list of disqualifying events or crimes that would preclude employment.
- Discuss and establish an appeals process.
- Discuss and identify options and estimated costs and/or sources of funding related to implementation.

If you would like to be a part of this workgroup, please send a letter of interest to my office by Sept. 17, 2007, indicating your interest, your background, the group of stakeholders you represent, and the commitment you can dedicate to this project. I will review the letters and determine the members of the workgroup by Oct. 8, 2007. All who indicate an interest will receive an acknowledgment from my office. As I indicated, 15 will be chosen to be permanent members of the workgroup. The names of those not chosen will be placed on an interested parties list. However, those individuals will be kept updated on workgroup meetings via written notices and agendas. Meetings will be open to the public and will include a public comment period.

The Departments look forward to researching and discussing these important issues, and we welcome your input. Please call 444- 2099 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Joan Miles, Director
Department of Public Health and Human Services