



Governor's Advisory Council on Aging Meeting

April 7, 2026, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Welcome and Introductions – Tessa Bailly, Aging Services bureau chief
Introduction of new council member, Jenn Prunty

In Attendance:

- Bob Meyers
- Brian LaMoure
- Audrey Finlayson
- Peggy Tombre
- Jenn Prunty
- Jerry Thex
- Gayle Carlson
- Tessa Bailly
- Lindsey Carter

SLTC Division Update – Lindsey Carter, SLTC Division Administrator

- Montana was awarded \$233 million for the inaugural year of the [Rural Health Transformation Program](#).
 - The program's leadership structure requires several new hires, specifically a program director to oversee operations and five program managers to lead each individual initiative.
 - The advisory committee convened in January, followed by a vendor meeting in March.
 - The SLTC component focuses on transitioning nursing facility reimbursements toward an acuity-based system. This shift aims to better support residents with complex care needs.
 - Continued funding over the five-year grant cycle is contingent upon meeting specific reporting metrics. All projects are required to include a comprehensive sustainability plan.
- DPHHS is actively recruiting for a complex care coordinator position. The position is posted now and will remain open until filled.

- DPHHS is launching Category D services under Big Sky Waiver to bridge the gap between traditional assisted living and inpatient psychiatric care. Under SB 524, this initiative provides specialized reimbursement for facilities catering to high-acuity residents with ADRD, TBI, or other serious mental illness. [Category D Status Handout](#)
- Following the 2023 Legislative session's directive to establish an Olmstead Plan, DPHHS collaborated with the Rural Institute to draft a comprehensive strategy for Montana.
- DPHHS collaborated with Mountain Pacific Quality Health to host several long-term care summits. A final report is being drafted and will be distributed to the council members upon completion.

Aging Services Bureau Update– Tessa Bailly, Aging Services bureau chief

- The bureau is currently updating state policy and procedures for the Older Americans Act and Long-Term Care Ombudsman programs. This revision process is expected to conclude by September 30, 2026, followed by a public posting of the policies.
- The state long-term care ombudsman position is currently open following Carmen's resignation in February. We are actively recruiting for the role.
 - Due to the current vacancy, we are working with our software provider to pull as much aggregate data as possible to help move the legislative audit on this program forward.
 - Per federal regulation, no resident files/records can be released for the audit without the sole approval of the state long-term care ombudsman.
- The Aging Services Bureau (State Unit on Aging) has commenced work on the next four-year state plan. Concurrently with this, Area Agencies on Aging will begin developing their respective needs assessments and area plans. Data and insights from the completed area plans will serve as the foundation for the next Montana State Plan on Aging. The final, signed, state plan is due to Administration for Community Living July 1, 2027, with an implementation date of October 1, 2027.

Governor's Conference on Aging – Tessa Bailly, Aging Services bureau chief

- The conference is scheduled to be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Kalispell on October 6-8, 2026.
- Conference sponsors and vendors are already signing up.
 - Easterseals Goodwill and EPAGA Home Care have committed to be sponsors.
- Tessa requested council assistance in identifying and recruiting potential speakers.
 - Jenn stated she will look into a speaker on social isolation.
 - Jerry also recommended a speaker on addiction.
 - Jenn recommended Lisa Shepard as a speaker, as Missoula Aging Services has started a "village" in their area.

AARP Fraud Awareness and Legislative Update – Marcus Meyers and Kristin Page-Nei, AARP

- AARP is conducting extensive fraud outreach. In 2024 over \$12.5 billion was lost due to fraud. This is a 25% increase from 2023. In Montana over \$23.2 million was lost.
- To learn of and register for all fraud awareness events coming up around Montana please go to <https://events.aarp.org/event/FraudPreventionMT/summary>.
- AARP will be hosting free shred events around Montana. To register call 1-877-926-8300.
 - April 22nd at the UPS Store in Helena.
 - April 30th at the UPS Store (on Grant Rd) in Billings.
- AARP has introduced a 'STOP and DROP' flyer designed as a quick-reference tool. This resource empowers individuals to identify and avoid potential scams and fraudulent activity before they become victims. Visit AARP's [Fraud Watch Network](#) for more information.
- AARP is hosting a Volunteer Summit in Helena on April 23-24, 2026.
- HJ 26 Committee: This committee is working on educating and streamlining the guardianship process. The bill is working to make sure education is available to all guardians.
- AARP is working on legislation to combat the fraud that happens with cryptocurrency kiosks. There are over 400 kiosks in Montana, and they are not required to be licensed.
- DPHHS is anticipating a \$34 million deficit. The department is looking at all non-essential services and how to combat the deficit.
- Kirstin also encouraged council members to bookmark the AARP [Events](#) page in their browser and check it regularly, as it will contain the most up to date listing of in-person and virtual events and connection opportunities.

Council Updates

- With their terms officially concluding at the end of June, the Council recognizes Bob and Peggy for their years of service. We appreciate their leadership and offer our best wishes as they transition to new chapters.

Council Priorities

Social Determinants of Health: Special emphasis on Access to Nutritious Food Choices, Transportation, Housing, and Social Support/Community Inclusion.

Elder Justice and Fraud Prevention: Special emphasis on Crime/Fraud/Scam Prevention

Age-Friendly Health Systems: Special emphasis on Dementia Care and Caregiver Workforce/Family Caregiver