



**DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH &
HUMAN SERVICES**

Governor's Advisory Council on Aging Meeting

January 27, 2026, 10 a.m. – 12 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
- Nancy Anderson,
- Becky Bird
- Susan Lubke
- Brian LaMoure
- Audrey Finlayson
- Peggy Tombre
- Jenn Prunty
- 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. This was the fourth-largest allocation nationally behind Texas, California, and Alaska.
 - An advisory committee has been established, comprising state agencies, private organizations, tribal communities, health care providers, and a representative from the Area Agencies on Aging.
 - 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](#)

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 in the coming months, followed by a public posting of the policies.
- In August the Legislative Audit Division began an audit on the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program. This audit is planned to take 18 months. The SLTC Division welcomes any recommendations the audit division may make.
- The Aging Services Bureau (State Unit on Aging) has commenced work on the next four-year State Plan. Concurrently, Area Agencies on Aging will begin developing their respective Area Plans. Data and insights from the completed Area Plans will serve as the foundation for the next Montana State Plan on Aging.
- Montana has three new Area Agency on Aging Directors.
 - Brittany Christiansen in Area I (Action for Eastern Montana)
 - Lindsey Dreadin in Area III (North Central Area Agency on Aging)
 - John Gorton in Area IV (Rocky Mountain Development Council)

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.
- The conference will span 2.5 days (afternoon start on Oct. 6, morning conclusion on the Oct. 8). The Centenarian Luncheon is set for Wednesday, Oct. 7.
- Tessa requested Council assistance in identifying and recruiting potential speakers.
 - Peggy proposed including a panel discussion focused on guardianship.

AARP and Legislative Update – Kristin Page-Nej, AARP

- AARP offers a monthly statewide volunteer call. This call consists of advocacy volunteers across the state who are advocating for legislation. She stated the council members are welcome to join the calls. The calls occur the first Tuesday of each month at 11 a.m.
- AARP is hosting a Volunteer Summit in Helena on April 23-24, 2026.
- HJ 26 Committee: The committee has requested that the Department draft formal guidance. Stakeholders are currently invited to provide feedback. The committee's primary focus is developing legislation that ensures guardianship is accessible without being overly restrictive.

- AARP is working with the Transportation Committee to have voices from the aging community and rural areas represented.
- AARP is working to make sure the public knows about Medicaid funding and the new work requirements. They are working to help exempt caregivers of older adults from the work requirements.
- 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. local.aarp.org/helena-mt/aarp-events [\[local.aarp.org\]](http://local.aarp.org)

BOLD Grant Update – Kyla Rock, DPHHS

- The BOLD grant is a five-year grant that focuses on risk reduction and brain health. Montana is addressing three prevention levels: early detection, access to treatment and diagnosis, and caregiver support.
- There are eight \$9,500 mini-grants available. To qualify for the mini-grants, the project needs to fall under one of the three prevention areas. The due date for applications is February 9, 2026. [Mini Grant Application](#)

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