PO BOX 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706
(406) 444-3064
FAX (406)
444-3036

Transition Review Committee

68th Montana Legislature

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JOLANDA SONGER, Secretary

July 24, 2024

Director Charles Brereton
Department of Public Health and Human Services
111 North Sanders, Suite 301
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Director Brereton:

The 68th Montana Legislature charged the Transition Review Committee with making recommendations to the Department of Public Health and Human Services on potential solutions for alleviating problems encountered during the transition of patients from the Montana State Hospital to community settings. The Transition Review Committee recommends that the Department:

- Establish a procedure to bridge Medicaid funding as part of the discharge planning process, including application assistance and approval before a patient is discharged whenever possible.

- Expand opportunities for Medicaid add-on payments for assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and other community-based residential facilities. Streamline the add-on application process, and provide applicants with a detailed rubric so they know what to expect from the assessment process. Implement automatic add-on approval for facilities receiving or diverting patients from Montana State Hospital.

- Provide training grants to community-based residential facilities that wish to give employees evidence-based training tailored to caring for patients with traumatic brain injury and dementia, especially patients with advanced disease or complex care needs. We particularly recommend grants to encourage training on de-escalation techniques, understanding and managing common behaviors, and communication techniques. The committee encourages Montana State Hospital to train its staff on these topics as well.

- Explore options for on-call support that offers tailored and skilled assistance to community-based residential facilities, so their staff have an alternative to emergency services when patients experience challenging behavioral and psychiatric symptoms of traumatic brain injury and dementia. Encourage community facilities to create and foster relationships with their local crisis response teams.

MONTANA LEGISLATIVE SERVICES DIVISION STAFF: JERRY HOWE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR • RACHEL WEISS, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND POLICY ANALYSIS • JASON MOHR, ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ANALYST • TODD EVERTS, DIRECTOR, LEGAL SERVICES OFFICE • DALE GOW, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER, OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SERVICES • ANGIE CARTER, FINANCIAL MANAGER

These recommendations were set by the Transition Review Committee at its July 15, 2024 meeting. If you need support to implement our recommendations or continue your current efforts to improve outcomes for Montanans transitioning from the Montana State Hospital, please let us know what assistance we can provide. Our next two meetings are September 13, 2024, and December 13, 2024.

Copies of this letter will be sent to the State Medical Officer, CEO of the Montana State Hospital, and Interim Medicaid & Health Services Executive Director. Please share these recommendations with the Health Care Facilities Executive Director and Health Care Facilities Quality & Regulatory Affairs Officer when you fill those positions.

Before closing, we wish to commend the department and its staff on current efforts to improve outcomes for the patients of Montana State Hospital, especially discharge planning, case review by the State Medical Officer, and hiring complex case coordinators. The committee was heartened to hear that Montana State Hospital intends to switch from paper patient records to an electronic system and encourages continued progress towards this key goal. We also thank the department for engaging with this committee and for its work to regain certification from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Carlson

Representative Jennifer Carlson
Presiding Officer
Transition Review Committee

Senator Chris Pope
Vice Presiding Officer
Transition Review Committee

cc: Dr. Douglas Harrington, State Medical Officer; Dr. Kevin Flanigan, Montana State Hospital CEO; and Rebecca de Camara, Interim Medicaid & Health Services Executive Director