

# DRAFT WORK PLAN 2025-2026



Children, Families, Health, and Human  
Services Interim Committee

Milly Allen

*Approved on September 23, 2025*

# COMMITTEE INFORMATION

## ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee (CFHHS) is one of several interim committees established in law. State law requires interim committees to meet in between legislative sessions to oversee state agencies, conduct interim studies, explore topics and issues brought forth by committee members, and propose bills and resolutions for consideration by the next Legislature.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Interim committee members are appointed in accordance with 5-5-211, MCA.

Senator	District & County	Phone	Email
Sen. John Esp	SD 29, Sweet Grass County	(406) 932-5662	john.esp@legmt.gov
Sen. Dennis Lenz	SD 25, Yellowstone County	(406) 671-7052	dennis.lenz@legmt.gov
Sen. Cora Neumann	SD 30, Gallatin County	(406) 219-7425	cora.neumann@legmt.gov
Sen. Mike Yakawich	SD 24, Yellowstone County	(406) 647-6391	mike.yakawich@legmt.gov

Representative	District & County	Phone	Email
Rep. Melody Cunningham	HD 97, Missoula County	(406) 493-7279	melody.cunningham@legmt.gov
Rep. Jodee Etchart	HD 51, Yellowstone County	(406) 318-9773	jodee.etchart@legmt.gov
Rep. SJ Howell	HD 100, Missoula County	(406) 531-4445	sj.howell@legmt.gov
Rep. George Nikolakakos	HD 22, Cascade County	(406) 823-0363	george.nikolakakos@legmt.gov
Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos	HD 20, Cascade County	(406) 223-2380	melissa.nikolakakos@legmt.gov

## COMMITTEE STAFF

The Legislative Services Division provides impartial, nonpartisan support to the Montana State Legislature, including committee staffing, administrative management, and legal and policy research.

Staff	Role	Phone	Email
Milly Allen	Committee Research Analyst	(406) 444-9280	milly.allen@legmt.gov
Maddie Krezowski	Committee Attorney	(406) 444-6857	madelyn.krezowski@legmt.gov
Jolanda Songer	Committee Secretary	(406) 444-0502	jolanda.songer@legmt.gov

COMMITTEE RULES

The Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee is subject to the Legislative Council’s Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines for Interim Committees. This document structures the requirements for the work of the interim, including parliamentary procedures, legislative reimbursement, and use of staff. It also provides for public notice and participation requirements.

USE OF COMMITTEE STAFF

Legislative Council’s rules require that the committee adopt a work plan by the conclusion of its second regular meeting. When the committee adds a topic to its approved work plan, it directs its research analyst to prioritize work related to that topic. The research analyst’s work to respond to a research request not included in the work plan may not exceed 16 hours, unless excess work is approved by the presiding officer and vice-presiding officer.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public provide comment on specific committee topics; time is also reserved at each meeting for public comment on any other matter within the jurisdiction of the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee. Public notice is given via email at least 10 calendar days in advance of a meeting. The presiding officer may establish time limits for public comment, if necessary.

Meeting materials, including agendas, are available on Committee Explorer:

<https://committees.legmt.gov/#/nonStandingCommittees/7>

Sign up for a participation portal account to submit comment or testify remotely: <https://participate.legmt.gov/>

MEETING DATES

The committee selected its meeting schedule at the July 8 meeting. The September meeting date was changed to September 23. It may revise this schedule once more in the future if necessary. The committee website will be updated to reflect any changes.

Meeting Schedule
July 8, 2025
September 23, 2025
November 5, 2025
January 13, 2026
March 9 and 10, 2026
May 5, 2026
July 8 and 9, 2026
September 8, 2026

If the committee creates subcommittees or work groups, meeting days for the main committee must be reduced to accommodate the subcommittee or work group.

# COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

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## WHY DOES THE COMMITTEE NEED A WORK PLAN?

Under state law, CFHHS is responsible for monitoring the activities of the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), the largest agency in state government. The Legislative Council assigned six of the studies requested by the 69th Montana Legislature to the committee this interim. Committee members may pose additional topics for the committee to explore this interim.

This work plan details the committee's study and agency oversight duties for the interim, which runs from July 1, 2025 through September 15, 2026. It is a tool for the committee and its members, allowing them to prioritize their work and provide clear direction to staff. Whether conducting a study, overseeing its assigned agency, reviewing ballot initiatives, or investigating a member topic, the committee's process follows a basic pattern:



Your work plan is the tool that allows you to plan and execute this **three-step process** for **each** committee work plan topic.

The first phase happens early in the interim, when the committee hears presentations by people with experience and expertise; takes public comment from interested parties, who may offer specific suggestions; and reviews informational materials, such as staff research papers.

In the second phase, the committee uses this information to narrow its focus. Members identify specific aspects, ideas, or questions to examine in depth. This phase helps members concentrate on the issues they consider to be of the greatest importance and obtain any additional information needed to make final recommendations.

During the final stage, members analyze information and, if desired, take action. Potential solutions, including legislation, are usually reviewed and refined at multiple meetings.

The depth of this three-step process is wholly dependent upon how much of its research analyst's FTE (full-time equivalent) the committee assigns to a topic. When developing its work plan, the committee must choose between breadth and depth: does it want to briefly study several issues, or thoroughly examine fewer of topics?

## WORK PLAN TOPICS

Work plan topics include agency oversight and other duties prescribed by law, interim studies requested by the 69<sup>th</sup> Montana Legislature, and member topics. The committee has 1.0 FTE of its research analyst's staff time dedicated to all of its work. When distributing this FTE across its work plan topics, the committee conveys its priorities for this interim.

This section reviews the entire menu of work plan topics available to the committee, which the committee prioritizes on page 7.

## AGENCY OVERSIGHT

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) is the largest state agency. Its 3,000 employees throughout the state are responsible for providing Montanans with public health services and a broad scope of assistance programs, including those designed to help children and the elderly, needy, disabled, abused, neglected, and mentally ill.

DPHHS operates the following facilities:

- the Intensive Behavior Center in Boulder, a secure, 12-bed facility for seriously developmentally disabled individuals who are committed to the facility by a court;
- the Montana State Hospital at Warm Springs and its Forensic Mental Health Facility at Galen, for adults with mental illness who have been committed for treatment by a court;
- the Montana Chemical Dependency Center in Butte, an inpatient treatment center for adults diagnosed as having an addiction to drugs or alcohol or who suffer co-occurring addiction and mental illness;
- the Mental Health Nursing Care Center in Lewistown, a long-term care facility for people who have a mental disorder, require a level of care that isn't available in the community, and can't benefit from treatment at the State Hospital; and
- the Eastern Montana Veterans' Home in Glendive, the Montana Veterans' Home in Columbia Falls, and the Southwest Montana Veterans' Home in Butte. The facilities are open to veterans and spouses who need skilled nursing care or suffer from Alzheimer's disease.

Agency oversight is a required duty of the interim committee, but the committee may decide how much of its staff time to dedicate to this duty. "Agency oversight" is an umbrella term that includes five specific tasks. The committee must decide how much of FTE to allot to each of these tasks.

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### TASK 1 - ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW

Interim committees review administrative rule proposals of the agencies for which they have oversight responsibility. The committee's legal staff reviews DPHHS rulemaking notices and provides regular updates, noting any rules that may be out of compliance with the Montana Administrative Procedure Act (MAPA). That law allows interim committees to, among other things:

- obtain an agency's rulemaking records to review them for compliance;

- submit written recommendations on adopting, amending, or rejecting a rule;
- require that a rulemaking hearing be held;
- require an economic impact statement relating to a rule adoption; and
- poll the Legislature by mail to determine if a proposed rule is consistent with legislative intent.

Interim committees also may delay the adoption of proposed rules by objecting to proposals that members believe do not comply with the provisions of MAPA. The Speaker of the House and the Senate President may break a tie vote on any rule objection being considered by an interim committee (2-4-112, MCA).

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#### TASK 2 - PROGRAM MONITORING

The committee monitors DPHHS operations with specific attention to issues likely to require future legislative action, opportunities for improving the laws governing the agency's operation and programs, and experiences that Montanans have had with the agency that may be improved through legislative action.

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#### TASK 3 - REVIEW OF ADVISORY COUNCILS AND REPORTS

At the request of any committee member, the committee may review statutorily created advisory councils and reports related to the agencies they oversee, to see if the councils or reports should be revised or repealed.

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#### TASK 4 - REVIEW OF DRAFT LEGISLATION

The interim committee process allows for an early review of agency-requested legislation. Interim committees typically authorize the drafting of many state agency bills in advance of the November election, which frees up time for the Legislative Services Division staff to concentrate on legislator bill draft requests after the election. Authorization to draft is not an endorsement of the legislation itself. Agency bills drafted as a result of this process must be introduced before the 2025 legislative session begins.

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#### TASK 5 - REQUIRED REPORTS

DPHHS and other entities present a number of statutorily-required reports to the committee. A table is available in Appendix A.

### BALLOT INITIATIVE REVIEW

The statutory requirement for interim committee review of ballot initiatives is in litigation at the Montana Supreme Court.

Committee staff will notify CFHHS when litigation is completed and if it has any duties in this area while the case is pending. If you have questions, please consult with the committee attorney.

Case: *Ellingson v. State*, Montana Supreme Court No. DA 25-0142 (Filed Feb. 18, 2025)

## ASSIGNED STUDIES

When the Montana Legislature approves a study resolution, it requests that an appropriate interim committee examine the topic. The Legislature requested 36 studies this interim, then ranked them via legislative poll after *sine die*. At its meeting in June of 2025, the Legislative Council distributed the 36 studies across several committees and councils, assigning each study based on its alignment with a committee's policy area. Six studies fall within the jurisdiction of CFHHS.

A study assignment is not a compulsory duty – the committee may include all, some, or none of the studies in its work plan. The committee may also elect to narrow the scope of a requested study. Please see the preliminary study outlines (PSOs) for more information, including estimated staff FTE. The committee may elect to assign more or less staff FTE to a study than used in the study's PSO. See Appendix B, Staff FTE Decision Matrix.

Rank (out of 36)	Assigned Study Resolution	Poll Points
11	HJ 26: Study guardianships and conservatorships	1,228
20	SJ 48: Interim study of the public health and safety impacts of marijuana legalization	921
22	SJ 13: Study resolution for emergency medical services	880
26	SJ 37: Interim survey of behavioral health services in Montana	820
29	SJ 29: Interim study resolution on coordinating efforts between OPI and DPHHS in addressing the impacts on children of prenatal exposure to meth and fentanyl	763
35	SJ 49: Study of youth and family behavioral health prevention	589

## MEMBER TOPICS

In addition to its agency oversight duties and assigned interim studies, CFHHS may wish to explore topics proposed by individual members. Member topics adopted for consideration by the committee must be included in its work plan. At its first meeting on July 8, 2025, the committee did not add any member topics to the work plan, choosing to focus on assigned studies.

*This section intentionally left blank, pending committee discussion.*

## WORK PLAN PRIORITIZATION

The Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee must distribute its assigned 1.0 FTE of research analyst time to its work plan topics.

See Appendix B, Staff FTE Decision Matrix.

Work Plan Topic	Required?	Assigned FTE
Agency oversight (AO)	Yes	Total to AO: 0.1
<i>AO 1 - Administrative rule review</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>0.02</i>
<i>AO 2 - Program monitoring</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>0.05</i>
<i>AO 3 - Review of advisory councils and reports</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>0.01</i>
<i>AO 4 - Review of draft legislation</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>0.01</i>
<i>AO 5 - Required reports</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>0.01</i>
HJ 26: Study guardianships and conservatorships	No	0.3
SJ 48: Interim study of the public health and safety impacts of marijuana legalization	No	0.2
SJ 13: Study resolution for emergency medical services	No	0.1
SJ 37: Interim survey of behavioral health services in Montana	No	0.2
SJ 29: Interim study resolution on coordinating efforts between OPI and DPHHS in addressing the impacts on children of prenatal exposure to meth and fentanyl	No	0.0 – Asked for re-referral to State-Tribal Interim Comm.
SJ 49: Study of youth and family behavioral health prevention	No	0.05
Member topic*	No	None
Emerging issues	No	0.05
<b>Total FTE</b>		<b>1.0</b>

\*The work plan must enumerate each included member topic and assign staff FTE to each.



# APPENDIX A – TABLE OF REQUIRED REPORTS

This table lists reports sent to the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee.

Reports are grouped by reporting entity; when an entity submits multiple reports, the reports are then organized by statute. Reports added during the 69<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session are not yet codified, so the statute field for each of these reports contains the number of the bill that created it.

Report	Reporting Entity	Deadline	Statute
Board of Medical Examiners, Montana Prescription Drug Registry Report**	DLI	Sept 2026	37-7-1514
Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman Annual Report	DOJ	Annual	41-3-1211
Section 1115 Waiver Proposal: HEART Initiative*	DPHHS	Sept 2026	16-12-122
Healing and Ending Addiction Through Recovery and Treatment Account Report	DPHHS	Sept 2026	16-12-122
State Measurement for Accountable, Responsive, and Transparent Government (SMART) Act Reports	DPHHS	Sept 2026	2-12-105
HELP-Link Workforce Program Reporting**	DPHHS	Sept 2026	39-12-103
Systemic Oversight of CPS Activities	DPHHS	As needed	41-3-1215
CPS Volunteer Program Activities Report	DPHHS	Sept 2026	41-3-132
Trauma Care System Report	DPHHS	Sept 2026	50-6-402
Out of State Placement Report	DPHHS	Annual	52-2-311
Private Alternative Adolescent Residential or Outdoor Programs Report	DPHHS	Sept 2026	52-2-803
Montana Developmental Center Residents Report	DPHHS	Sept 2026	53-20-225
Suicide Reduction Plan	DPHHS	Sept 2026	53-21-1102
Children’s Mental Health Bureau, Targeted Case Management Semiannual Report	DPHHS	Semiannual	53-21-508
Section 1115 Waivers	DPHHS	Sept 2026	53-2-215
Medicaid Change Reporting, Provider Rates Report**	DPHHS	As Needed	53-6-101
Medicaid Expansion Quarterly Report**	DPHHS	Quarterly	53-6-1325
Medicaid Managed Care	DPHHS	As needed	53-6-710
Medicaid Service Provider Rate Adequacy	DPHHS	Every 4 years	HB 419 (2025)
Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics Report	DPHHS	Quarterly	HB 574 (2025)
Child Abuse and Neglect Registry Expungement Report	DPHHS	Annual	SB 468 (2025)
Insurance Premium Support Account Fund Usage Report	DPHHS	Annual	SB 535 (2025)
Mental Health Ombudsman Annual Report	Governor’s Office	Annual	2-15-210
Coordinating Council for State Prevention Programs Report*	Interagency	Sept 2026	2-15-225
Montana Foster Youth Higher Education Assistance Program Report	OCHE	Sept 2026	20-26-633

\*Report sent to legislature per statute; CFHHS has agency oversight of reporting entity

\*\*Report sent to multiple interim committees per statute

APPENDIX B – STAFF FTE DECISION MATRIX

Topic	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
HJ 26: STUDY GUARDIANSHIPS AND CONSERVATORSHIPS (Ranked 11 out of 36)	<b>0.5 FTE</b> All of Option B, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Two additional panels or presentations</li><li>One additional staff research paper</li></ul>	<b>0.3 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>0.15 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>No Action</b>
SJ 48: STUDY OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPACTS OF MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION (Ranked 20 out of 36)	<b>0.9 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>0.5 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>0.05 FTE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Panel presentation</li><li>Staff paper</li></ul>	<b>No Action</b>
SJ 13: STUDY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (Ranked 22 out of 36)	<b>0.3 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>0.2 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>0.1 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>No Action</b>
SJ 37: INTERIM SURVEY OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES IN MONTANA (Ranked 26 out of 36)	<b>0.75 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>0.4 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>0.1 FTE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Panel presentation</li><li>Stakeholder presentation</li><li>Staff paper</li></ul>	<b>No Action</b>
SJ 29: INTERIM STUDY OF COORDINATING EFFORTS BETWEEN OPI AND DPHHS IN ADDRESSING THE IMPACTS ON CHILDREN OF PRENATAL EXPOSURE TO METH AND FENTANYL (Ranked 29 out of 36)	<b>0.5 FTE</b> All of Option B, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Two additional panels or presentations</li><li>One additional staff research paper</li></ul>	<b>0.2 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>0.1 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>No Action</b>
SJ 49: STUDY OF YOUTH AND FAMILY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PREVENTION (Ranked 35 out of 36)	<b>0.9 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>0.5 FTE</b> <i>See preliminary study outline</i>	<b>0.05 FTE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Panel presentation</li><li>Staff paper</li></ul>	<b>No Action</b>
MEMBER TOPIC <i>The work plan must enumerate each member topic and assign it an individual proportion of staff FTE. The FTE estimates in this row are per member topic.</i>	<b>0.5 FTE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Three to five panels or presentations</li><li>Three staff papers, comparative analyses, presentations, or other detailed research</li></ul>	<b>0.3 FTE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Two to three panels or presentations</li><li>Two staff papers, comparative analyses, presentations, or other detailed research</li></ul>	<b>0.05 FTE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Panel presentation</li><li>Staff paper</li></ul>	<b>No Action</b>

Topic	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
AGENCY OVERSIGHT TASK 1: ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW			<b>0.02 FTE</b>  Research analyst performs minimal administrative duties related to administrative rule review.	
AGENCY OVERSIGHT TASK 2: PROGRAM MONITORING		<b>0.05 FTE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory presentation by DPHHS</li> <li>• Presentations and updates from DPHHS at each committee meeting</li> <li>• Monitoring or research into aspects of a program or agency, if CFHHS chooses</li> <li>• Staff attends Helena-area agency meetings and presentations as possible</li> </ul>	<b>0.02 FTE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory presentation by DPHHS</li> <li>• Additional presentations from DPHHS as requested by CFHHS</li> <li>• Limited monitoring or research into aspects of a program or agency, if CFHHS chooses</li> </ul>	
AGENCY OVERSIGHT TASK 3: REVIEW OF ADVISORY COUNCILS AND REPORTS		<b>0.01 FTE*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written list of required reports and advisory councils</li> <li>• Written summary of selected council, commission, or other entity's duties, functions, and operations</li> <li>• Agency presentation on work of the council or commission</li> </ul> *Add 0.005 FTE per additional council, commission, etc. examined; particularly large commissions or councils may require additional FTE	<b>0.005 FTE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written list of required reports and advisory councils</li> </ul>	<b>No Action</b>
AGENCY OVERSIGHT TASK 4: REVIEW OF AGENCY DRAFT LEGISLATION			<b>0.01 FTE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee reviews legislative proposals from DPHHS in summer of 2026; may authorize drafting of the legislation for preintroduction</li> </ul>	
AGENCY OVERSIGHT TASK 5: REQUIRED REPORTS		<b>0.01 FTE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DPHHS presents up to four reports at a regular CFHHS meeting</li> <li>• Follow-up research by staff on up to two reports</li> </ul>	<b>0.005 FTE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive copy of each report</li> </ul>	

MINIMUM FTE FOR AGENCY OVERSIGHT: 0.055 FTE (selecting Option C for Tasks 1, 2, 4, and 5 and Option D for Task 3)

MAXIMUM FTE AGENCY OVERSIGHT: 0.1 FTE base + 0.005 FTE per each additional commission reviewed in Task 3; e.g., 0.1 FTE to examine one commission, 0.12 FTE to examine five commissions.