

Montana Early Childhood Coalition – Conference Call Minutes
November 15, 2016

- Participants on the call reviewed the updated proposal from HMHB regarding the creation of the Montana Early Childhood Coalition (updated from previous proposal with name of Montana Children’s Alliance) and updated purpose – which at this point will be to hold ongoing calls during the legislative session to share information. The group will also work to develop common messaging on some topics and legislation.
- Review of the Governor’s proposed Executive budget (Section B – DPHHS budget). The budget can be found at: http://budget.mt.gov/Budgets/2019_Budget
- The DPHHS specific budget can be found at:
http://budget.mt.gov/Portals/29/execbudgets/2019_Budget/Section%20B%20-%202019B.pdf
- An executive summary can be found at:
http://budget.mt.gov/Portals/29/execbudgets/2019_Budget/2019%20Montana%20Biennial%20Budget%20Overview.pdf
- Highlights of the governor’s budget, related to early childhood coalitions, include:
 - o \$2.4 million dollars of state general fund proposed for STARS to Quality (\$1.2 million per year of the biennium)
 - o \$12.0 million dollars of state general fund proposed for early childhood education (\$6.0 million per year of the biennium) in the form of voluntary preschool for at risk 4-year-old children (this proposal will also have an actual bill that accompanies it – the bill is still being drafted and is not yet available for review – so the details of this funding remains unclear – the proposal indicates that it will be available as grants to public schools, Head Starts, or community-based providers)
 - o There is additional federal authority requested as present law adjustment to meet the requirements of the Child Care Development Fund – however specifics regarding the purpose for this additional funding is not made clear beyond saying that it is necessary to fund the requirements of the reauthorization
 - o Child protection services increased funding is limited to money to support the growing caseload but does not include any request for additional staff
 - o Public Health and Safety is requesting federal authority to support the grant they have received to conduct the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System to develop public health programs aimed at improving the health of pregnant women and infants
 - o There is a reduction in tobacco settlement funds to the Chronic Disease Bureau of \$2.4 million each year of the biennium. It is unclear what programs this would impact
 - o There is \$1.2 million state general fund requested to support youth crisis diversion programs (this is requested as One Time Only funding of \$600,000 per year of the biennium)
- The Montana Advocates for Children (MAC) is in the process of finalizing its legislative priorities for this session. The legislative topics currently on their list to advocate for include: STARS and early childhood education funding – support the Governor’s budget, advocate for increase in child care provider rates, and advocate for increasing eligibility for best beginnings scholarships.

MAC will provide updates to this group once it's legislative agenda has been finalized and begins to move forward.

- Participants discussed activities related to education and advocacy that could be done by local coalitions:
 - Meet with your local legislators. Here is a list of the leadership positions:
 - **SENATE**
 - President of the Senate, Senator Scott Sales, Gallatin County
 - President Pro-temp, Senator Bob Keenan, Flathead County
 - Majority Leader, Senator Fred Thomas, Ravalli County
 - Majority Whips, Senators Ed Buttrey, Cary Smith, and Mark Blasdel
 - Minority Leader: Jon Sesso (D- Butte)
 - Minority Whips: JP Pomnichowski (D) Bozeman and Tom Facey (D) Missoula
 - Committee on Committees. The Committee on Committees makes all of the committee and committee chair appointments in the Senate: Senators Dee Brown, Kris Hanson, Ed Buttrey, Chas Vincent, Jeff Wellborn, Ryan Osmundson
 - **HOUSE**
 - Speaker: Austin Knudsen (R-Culbertson)
 - Speaker Pro Tempore: Greg Hertz (R-Polson)
 - Majority Leader: Ron Ehli (R-Hamilton)
 - Majority Whips: Alan Doane (R-Bloomfield), Brad Tschida (R-Missoula), Seth Berglee (R-Joliet), Theresa Manzella (R-Hamilton)
 - Minority Leader: Jenny Eck (D-Helena)
 - Minority Whips: Casey Schreiner (D-Great Falls), Nate McConnell (D-Missoula), Shane Morigeau (D-Missoula)
 - House committees also came out this past weekend (after the call) and can be found at: <http://leg.mt.gov/content/Committees/Session/2017-house-committees.pdf>
 - Provide advocacy education to coalition members. Gallatin county's ECCC is doing this with NAME and here is the information: **The Bozeman NAMI event will be December 12th from 1-2:30pm. During that 1.5 hours, they support participants' learning in how to craft a message in preparation of advocating or testifying in the presence of legislators. My understanding is the NAMI does these trainings regularly, so it would be worth exploring as to other communities' access to this same opportunity. Those interested in the December event can inquire at this email: Steph.Kamerman@gallatin.mt.gov**
 - HMHB will reach out to NAMI to determine whether this training could be provided when the ECC coordinators will be in Helena in January, so stay tuned!
 - Discussed collaborating with other groups with similar legislative goals and agendas. Here is information on one such group: The Montana Association of Christians has acknowledged children's mental health as an issue for advocacy: <http://www.macmt.org/legislative-agenda.html>
 - Discussed collaboration around the issue of maternal mental health and whether or not work could be done to create a task force or other type of group to come together around improving maternal mental health

- Gallatin County ECCC has prioritized high quality affordable and available child care as one of their top issues to address. Do other coalitions have defined areas of priority to share?
- HMHB will work on one page summaries of the STARS funding proposal and Early Childhood Education funding proposal to circulate for review on the next call as a way to start developing common talking points around these issues. Other groups will also be developing these types of informational/educational materials, so HMHB will work to align with these as they are developed too. Drafts will be provided in the near future.
- There is a white paper from the Montana Budget and Policy Center on child care that can be found here: <http://www.montanabudget.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Child-Care-Final.pdf>
- Montana Budget and Policy Center is also having its 3rd legislative summit for those who may be interested: <http://www.montanabudget.org/3rd-legislative-summit/>
- IF YOU HAVE OTHER RESOURCES TO SHARE, PLEASE SEND TO: sarah@hmhb-mt.org