



## Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee

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### 62nd Montana Legislature

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### COMMITTEE TO HEAR CHILD ABUSE, MONTANA DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER PROPOSALS

HELENA -- A legislative committee will complete its study of childhood trauma later this month by deciding whether to submit proposals related to child abuse and neglect to the 2013 Legislature for consideration.

The Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee also will review and act on a bill draft to require the state to develop a plan to close the Montana Developmental Center (MDC). The facility in Boulder serves severely developmentally disabled adults.

The committee meets Aug. 20-21 in Helena.

The committee will consider the legislative proposals on Aug. 20. The child abuse and neglect legislation was developed in response to passage of Senate Joint Resolution 30 in 2011. That resolution required a study of childhood trauma and ways to reduce its effects on children.

The committee will review bill drafts to revise laws relating to confidentiality of child abuse and neglect reports and to transfer \$10 million into an endowment fund for children. Interest earned on the endowment goes into the Children's Trust Fund, which provides grants to local communities for child abuse and neglect prevention efforts.

The committee also will revisit a bill draft that would create an office of child and family ombudsman. The committee approved that proposal in June but asked for revisions to place the office with the Department of Justice.

The committee also will consider two bill drafts involving MDC. One would allow for a federally designated advocacy organization to receive the reports of client abuse or mistreatment that MDC must currently provide to the Mental Disabilities Board of Visitors. The other would require DPHHS to develop a plan to close MDC and to move residents out of the facility and into community services by June 30, 2015.

The committee authorized the bill drafts after hearing from DPHHS and Disability Rights Montana in June about conditions and changes at MDC following the 2010 sexual assault of a resident by an MDC employee.

The committee will take public comment on all of the bill drafts before deciding whether to introduce the bills in the 2013 legislative session.

On Tuesday, the committee will hear from Insurance Commissioner Monica Lindeen about the results of a study of the costs and benefits of creating a database containing information about all insurance payments made by all public and private insurers in Montana. The 2011 Legislature required Lindeen's office to undertake the study and report back to the committee on its results, including any recommendations for legislation.

The Aug. 20 meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. in Room 137 of the Capitol. The committee will meet at 8:30 a.m. on Aug. 21. The agenda, bill drafts and related information are available on the committee's website, at <http://leg.mt.gov/cfhhs>.

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