



# **HJ 6 (2017) STUDY SUMMARY**

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Law and Justice Interim Committee  
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**MONTANA STATE LEGISLATURE**



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## BACKGROUND

The 2017 Legislature adopted House Joint Resolution 6 (HJ 6), which requested an interim study of methamphetamine use and illegal use of opioids in Montana. The resolution's preamble noted an increase in arrests for conduct involving methamphetamines, in workloads for various actors in the criminal justice arena, and in demand for drug treatment services. It also listed the destructive effects of drug use and abuse on Montana children and families.

HJ 6 requested that an interim committee review:

- the extent of methamphetamine use and illegal use of opioids in Montana;
- the degree to which methamphetamine use and illegal use of opioids has affected services provided by law enforcement, the judiciary, state and local government agencies, and programs that work with individuals involved with methamphetamine use or illegal use of opioids or family members impacted by use of the drugs;
- the treatment available for methamphetamine use or illegal use of opioids, including how the course of treatment and availability of treatment affects an individual's ability to be reunified with children who have been removed from the home; and
- the efforts being undertaken by law enforcement, the judiciary, and state and local governments to reduce methamphetamine use and illegal use of opioids and mitigate their impacts on Montanans and on state and local government agencies.

In addition, the study resolution asked the committee to develop recommendations to reduce meth use and abuse of opioids, mitigate the impacts of drug use and abuse on Montanans, and improve collaboration and cooperation among state and local governments to address the impacts of drug use and abuse.

The Legislative Council assigned the HJ 6 study to the Law and Justice Interim Committee (LJIC).

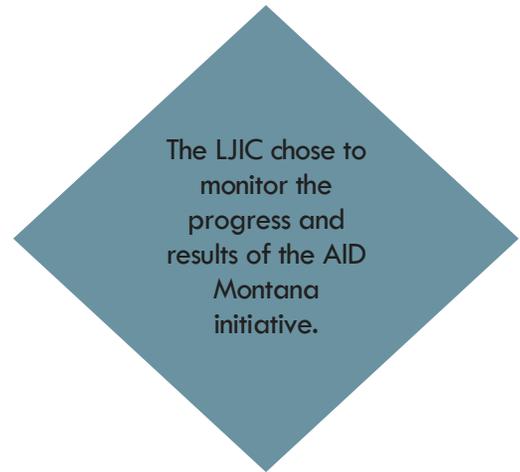
## AID Montana Initiative

In mid-April 2017, as the regular legislative session was winding down and attention was turning to the interim's activities, Attorney General Tim Fox announced that his office would begin an initiative to examine similar topics. The initiative, known as Addressing the Impact of Drugs (AID Montana), was funded in part by a grant from the Montana Healthcare Foundation. Planned activities for AID Montana included:

- information gathering about and analysis of the extent and impact of drug and alcohol abuse in Montana, including data from the Department of Justice, Department of Corrections, Department of Public Health and Human Services, Office of Public Instruction, and the judicial system;
- six listening sessions around the state during the summer of 2017;
- a substance abuse and addiction summit in the fall of 2017, to bring stakeholders together to discuss best practices and solutions to drug abuse; and
- development of a strategic plan before the 2019 legislative session, including use of work groups to focus on specific areas of the plan.

## HJ 6 Study Approach

In planning its work and meeting time for the interim, the LJIC chose to monitor the progress and results of the AID Montana initiative, including receiving regular reports from the Attorney General's staff. The LJIC also tried to schedule a fall meeting in conjunction with the proposed substance abuse and addiction summit. Staff and LJIC members would participate in the summit and work groups or listening sessions as possible. The LJIC hoped to receive an update on the strategic plan before the end of the 2017-2018 interim. Committee members also reserved staff and meeting time to hear more from stakeholders in a panel presentation.



## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Even though not all LJIC meeting agendas devoted time to consider the HJ 6 study, the topics of substance abuse and its effects on individuals, families, and communities was often a present theme in other LJIC work throughout the interim, including in public comment.

### Updates from the Attorney General's Office

At the LJIC's September 2017 meeting, staff from the Attorney General's Office presented a report it commissioned that detailed major initiatives identified in the state that attempt to address the problems of substance abuse. It included state, tribal, and local programs ranging from enforcement to treatment to prevention. The comprehensive report combined data, maps, justice system flowcharts, and detailed descriptions of programs to help stakeholders, policymakers, and Montanans understand the current scope of substance abuse in the state, as well as efforts to mitigate the impacts of substance abuse.

The Attorney General's staff continued to provide updates on the AID Montana initiative at LJIC meetings. At the LJIC's July 2018 meeting, the Department of Justice requested six bill drafts related to the AID Montana initiative. Although detailed information was not available at that time, the department will work with legislative sponsors and other stakeholders to develop that legislation before the start of the 2019 Legislature.

### Substance Use Disorder Summit

The Montana Health Care Foundation hosted the Montana Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Summit in Helena on November 7, 2017. Three members of the LJIC attended: Senator Diane Sands, Representative Ryan Lynch, and Representative Lola Sheldon-Galloway. The purpose of the SUD Summit was to identify possible solutions to the substance abuse problem facing the state and its people. At the summit, LJIC members who attended learned about the ways state, local, and tribal leaders are working to address the challenges created by substance abuse, the gaps that have been identified in the current resources, and ideas for next steps to address problems faced by communities and individuals.

At the summit, the LJIC members also received a draft copy of a strategic plan developed by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services to address substance use disorders in the state.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The LJIC did not make recommendations as a result of this study.

## RESOURCES

- Study page for the HJ 6 (2017) interim study: <https://leg.mt.gov/css/Committees/interim/2017-2018/Law-and-Justice/Committee-Topics/hj6-study.html>
- “Substance Use in Montana: A Summary of State Level Initiatives for the Department of Justice,” Sept. 2017: <https://media.dojmt.gov/wp-content/uploads/Substance-Use-in-Montana-DOJ-FINAL-September-19th.pdf>
- Montana Substance Use Disorder Summit page: <https://mthcf.org/2017/10/sud-summit/>
- Draft Interim Strategic Plan, “Addressing Substance Use Disorder in Montana,” 2017-2019, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/Documents/AddressingSubstanceUseDisorderInMontana.pdf>

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