

Proposal for Legislation – 2023 Legislative Session

Eliminate Governor’s Committee on Telecommunication Access Services for Persons with Disabilities

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1. What is the problem or issue?

The Montana Telecommunications Access Program (MTAP) and Montana Relay are administered by DPHHS. The Governor’s committee serves as an oversight board to MTAP and Montana Relay. The committee meets at least four times a year to establish and administer a program to provide specialized telecommunications equipment and services to persons with disabilities. The level of authority granted to the committee over the administration of services creates unnecessary barriers to providing services and inefficiencies within DPHHS.

2. What do you want the legislation to do?

Eliminate the Committee on Telecommunications Access Services for Persons with Disabilities as authorized under MCA 2-15-2212, with powers and duties defined under MCA 53-19-305. Currently, DPHHS cannot establish policy or procedures or make budgetary decisions without the committee’s approval. This process is inefficient and creates unnecessary administrative costs. Eliminating the committee would allow staff to have more direct service delivery time and have more funds to allocate to services as arranging for quarterly committee meetings is cumbersome and costly.

3. If possible, please list the MCA (Montana Code Annotated) sections that would need to be amended.

MCA 2-15-2212, 53-19-302, 53-19-303, 53-19-304, 53-19-305, 53-19-306, 53-19-307, 53-19-308, 53-19-309, 53-19-310, 53-19-311, 53-19-315,

4. If the proposed change requires additional funding, what funding sources do you propose?

The agency does not require additional funding for this legislation.

5. Has similar legislation been requested in the past, been introduced in another state, or provided as a model act? If so, please provide a citation, reference, or point of contact.

Similar legislation has not been requested in the past. DPHHS is unaware if other states have telecommunication access committees.