



Montana Veterans Long-Term Care Needs Study

Prepared by:

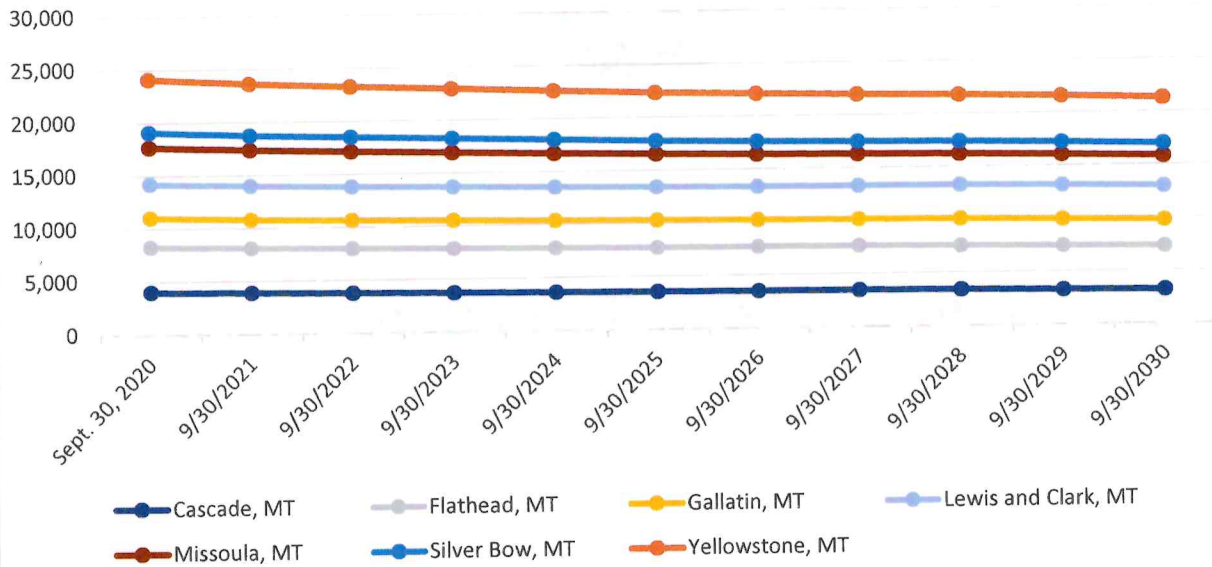
Barb Smith, SLTCD Administrator

Senior and Long Term Care Division

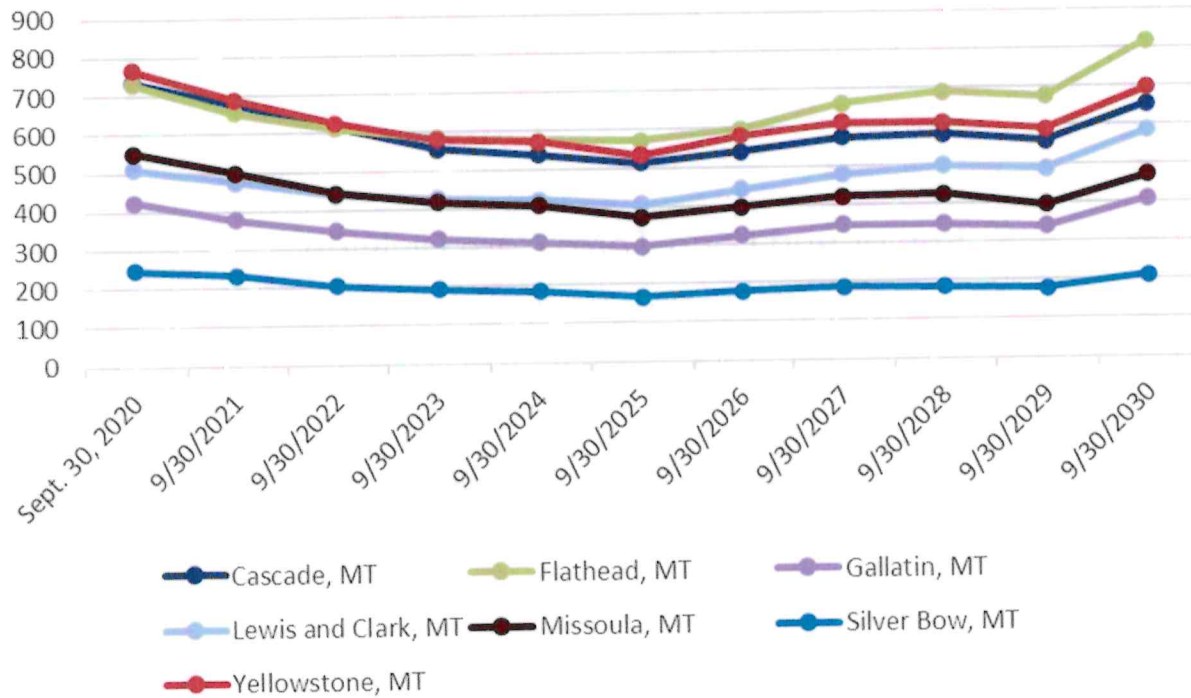
1100 N. Last Chance Gulch, 4th Floor
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 444-4077

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Veteran Population - Aged 65+ Population Centers



Montana Veterans - Aged 85+ Population Centers



Executive Summary

Objective: To identify key challenges and issues relating to long-term care for Montana Veterans and make actionable recommendations.

Purpose: The Montana DPHHS Senior and Long Term Care Division (SLTCD), in collaboration with the Montana Veteran Affairs Division (MTVA) and other stakeholders, is tasked with assessing the long-term care needs of our state's Veterans, particularly those residing in rural areas. House Bill 264, enacted during the 2023 Montana legislative session, mandates that the decennial Veterans Long-Term Care Needs Study focuses on living conditions and support systems crucial for the well-being of Montana's Veteran community. It also requires an assessment of the future needs for state and/or federal Veteran cemeteries.

Challenge: At its core, this study grapples with understanding social determinants of health — such as access to healthcare, economic stability, physical well-being, dependability of transportation, or community engagement, to name a few — that enable or impede a Veteran's ability to age in place successfully. It's not just about healthcare services; it's about the fabric of daily life that allows Veterans to live fully, independently, and with dignity. Such a complex system of factors demands a holistic approach for gathering information, requiring time and careful consideration. Additionally, a strong messaging campaign and methodical outreach will be required for persuading Veterans to take the necessary time for fully and honestly completing a 10-minute survey.

Info Gathering: Data gathered from the 2020 census, MTVA, the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, DPHHS Public Health and Safety Division, and SLTCD will inform much of the Veteran demographics and facilities analysis. SLTCD will also partner with the MTVA Cemetery Administration to compile information about the accessibility to and quality of current state and federal cemetery sites. An online survey for Veterans, also available in print, will enable the gathering of more nuanced information about individual Veterans' social determinants of health. The online survey requires 10 minutes of a participant's time in a single session and will be available to the public for three months. Additional focus groups and randomly sampled phone interviews will help glean more information from Veterans' spouses, caregivers, and providers.

Messaging: Perhaps one of the most crucial components for getting buy-in from survey participants is a consistent and persuasive messaging campaign. SLTCD is crafting a communication plan for this project, which will establish uniform verbiage for print and web materials and marketing outreach. The plan will set up a framework for tracking key performance indicators, to better ensure the campaign is resonating with the target audiences, namely Veterans and the individuals who support them, and making adjustments as needed.

Reporting: SLTCD staff appreciates the opportunity to work with stakeholders on this project, as they provide valuable feedback throughout the process: Roger Hagan, Erin Carpenter, Duane Cunningham, William White, Kelly Ackerman, Senator Wendy McKamey, and Representative Marta Bertoglio. The stakeholder group has agreed to regular email check-ins, scheduling Zoom meetings only when deemed necessary. SLTCD will email progress reports to stakeholders the first and third weeks of every month until the project is completed. As well, the division will present updates for bimonthly SAVA committee meetings.

Timeline: This schedule is designed to balance thoroughness with efficiency, considering both the extensive scope of the project and the fiscal responsibility required by budget constraints. The intent is to have a finalized, formal report ready to present by the end of September 2024, in time for the 2025 legislative session.

1. Preparation Phase (6-10 weeks)
2. Data Collection Phase (12 weeks)
3. Data Analysis Phase (10-16 weeks)
4. Report Writing and Finalization (4-6 weeks)

Total Estimated Time: Approximately 44 weeks, or around 10 months.