



Department of Public Health and Human Services

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Greg Gianforte, Governor

Adam Meier, Director

August 9, 2021

Legislators:

Earlier this year, I began meeting with DPHHS leadership to conduct an overall organizational health assessment of the agency. My overarching goal from the start was to understand what works well and what doesn't, and then to create a cohesive and strategic plan that will allow us to better serve Montanans.

In my discussions with leadership, I was pleased, but not surprised, to learn about the excellent service delivery DPHHS employees provide daily to the thousands of Montanans. That came across very clearly in my meetings with leadership. There is much to be proud of, but also — as with any large organization — there are many things we can improve together.

My goal going forward is to build on current successes, and implement changes where they are needed.

At DPHHS we are tasked with great responsibility. We deliver services to some of the most vulnerable Montanans on a daily basis, and come into contact with people at some of the most critical moments of their lives. This agency does our best to protect children from harm, help provide health coverage to thousands of eligible Montanans, promote healthy living and address food insecurity, among all the other key services we provide. We must always continue to improve every day.

Over the past several months, I drew upon the vast historical experience of agency leadership and my own background to identify areas where improvements can be made and where we can better target our limited resources through a revised organizational structure. This was only possible due to the detailed feedback and input I received through the process.

An updated org chart is attached.

The general focus of the upcoming changes is designed to **improve external relations, customer service and stakeholder engagement, improve coordination among internal and external agencies and departments, better allocate resources, improve professional development opportunities, reduce organizational risk, and maximize our leadership team to move key initiatives forward.**

To begin, I've asked **Marie Matthews, Erica Johnston, Laura Smith and Morgan Taylor** to take on new key leadership roles as part of the new organizational structure. I appreciate each of them agreeing to serve the agency in these new capacities. I am confident the skill sets these leaders bring to these roles will ensure the department is operating at top capacity to serve the needs of Montanans.

Marie has agreed to serve in a new role as Chief Innovation Officer to lead a new health and human services innovation office. In this role, she will utilize her knowledge of Medicaid and human services to review the numerous Medicaid waivers, pilots and innovations, along with other human service

programs, to design a more cohesive and strategic approach to building a comprehensive continuum of care. Marie will also continue to serve as the State Medicaid Officer until the vacancy is filled.

Erica will assume the role of Executive Director of Economic Security Services and **Morgan** will serve as Chief of Staff to help lead these divisions. Erica's prior experience as Operations Service Branch Manager will help these divisions achieve my objectives of maximizing resources, delivering efficient and effective services, and optimizing customer experience.

I have asked **Laura** to apply her program knowledge and communications skills to lead the department's work on customer service and building external relationships as the Executive Director of External Relations. She will also continue to oversee the Public Health and Safety Division, including our ongoing COVID-19 response. We need to invest in proactively telling our story and communicating the important work you all do every day to stakeholders, legislators, and the media.

The components of External Affairs will include the following positions: **Provider Relations Coordinator, Chief Employment and Training Officer, Faith and Community-Based Services Coordinator, Director of American Indian Health, Refugee Resettlement Coordinator, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Fair Hearings and Office of Public Information.** The first three are new positions and will be advertised soon or as funding or positions are finalized. The Director of American Indian Health will be advertised soon as well. The last four are already staffed by **Kathe Quittenton, Brenton Craggs, Iryna O'Connor and Jon Ebelt.**

In relation to External Affairs, it's vital that we bolster our communication efforts. For example, we rely heavily on our dedicated provider network to deliver services to vulnerable Montanans. This work is an ongoing partnership and one that has warranted a re-dedication of resources. We hope to establish the **Provider Relations Coordinator** position with the goal of helping us improve our customer service and stakeholder engagement efforts. This is a position I created in my previous role in Kentucky, and it paid dividends in our relationship with providers there. I hope to have the same success here.

Another key position is the **Faith and Community-Based Services Coordinator** role. One area of focus will be to help increase recruitment of more foster parents from the faith-based community. I believe we can truly make some inroads with this position and increase foster parent recruitment, as well as engage other community partners in our work. This position can also assist with vaccine outreach efforts to these organizations and the people they serve.

Finally, with Erica moving to her new role, I have decided to split the Operations Services Branch into three entities who will report directly to me. We will soon recruit for a new Chief Information Officer (CIO) to replace **David Crowson** who recently announced that he has accepted a new position in the private sector. Under this new structure, all IT functions will report to the new CIO.

This change is happening for multiple reasons. DPHHS has substantial investments in numerous IT systems to help determine Medicaid, SNAP and TANF eligibility, reimburse Medicaid providers for services they provide and support the child welfare system. This behind-the-scenes effort is vitally important. Plus, we must always keep a close eye on network security. I believe it's crucial we have all of these functions under the CIO.

We have also grown our dashboard capacity exponentially to allow us to share Medicaid, SNAP, TANF and child welfare information, and will bolster this effort by creating an Office of Health Data and Analytics to better support the agencies' ability to leverage data driven decision-making and better measure outcomes.

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We will also bring the Office of Budget and Finance and Business and Financial Services Division under a Chief Financial Officer to provide leadership to the agency on budgetary and financial management to ensure the delivery of timely, affordable, and effective health and human services. And, as I've announced previously, the Office of Inspector General (previously named Quality Assurance Division) and the Inspector General, **Carter Anderson**, now reports directly to the Director.

These changes won't happen overnight. However, I am very excited to begin implementing them in the coming months. I will continue to provide ongoing updates as things move forward and as we fill these positions. I look forward to implementing this strategic vision in partnership with all of you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adam Meier".

Adam Meier, Director
DPHHS