

BHAM Montana Legislative Update – February 3, 2025

The Legislators work for the people of Montana. It's imperative that you stand up and make your voice heard!

Montana Medicaid and all other states were thrown into chaos last week with the Trump Administration's executive action on freezing federal funds. The Medicaid portal was locked and no one was able to access the system. Our providers reported that the portal finally reopened near the end of the day. We're awaiting clarification on court actions around the federal freeze and will keep you apprised of the chaotic situation.

There are many advocacy opportunities around behavioral health in this legislative session: several bills addressing Medicaid Expansion continuation, a number of Children's and Families Services Division bills, and several addressing reimbursement rates. To participate in any of the committee hearings, click this link and sign up:

<https://www.legmt.gov/participate/>

You can review all of the bills BHAM is tracking [HERE](#)

Bills we're watching:

Pre-Authorization Bills:

We are watching LC1785, LC1957 (Karlen) and LC1961 (Buttrey). These bills deal with prior authorization for insurance. We'll let you know when they are scheduled for hearing.

Medicaid Rate Reimbursement:

There are two bills we're working on for rate reimbursements to Medicaid providers. The 2023 Legislative Session approved \$339M to bring Medicaid rates up to the Guidehouse rate study guidelines. Unfortunately, those guidelines were based on 2020 costs for Medicaid providers. In the last five years since the 2020 costs were studied, inflation and personnel costs have climbed dramatically and providers are once again well-below the cost of delivering the care. Urgent action is needed this session.

1. [LC4190](#) will be reentered into the bill system as LC821 as soon as it is drafted. This bill was pulled for introduction and then had to be resubmitted for drafting. This bill will allow DPHHS to review cost reports for Medicaid providers in senior and long-term care, mental health, substance use disorder and intellectual developmentally disabled programs every other year. Medicaid providers are already 5 years behind costs in reimbursement. **BHAM strongly supports this bill and encourages advocacy efforts to move it forward.**

2. LC2035 (not yet drafted) from Representative Caferro, would allow for an inflationary factor to be introduced into statute for all Medicaid providers, similar to the inflationary factor already in statute for physicians who accept Medicaid. This bill is not yet scheduled for hearing. **BHAM strongly supports this bill and encourages advocacy efforts to move it forward.**

Medicaid Expansion:

1. [HB245](#) from Senator Buttrey was heard on Wednesday January 22nd at the Capitol. Dozens of proponents spoke in favor of the bill, and no one opposed it. Additional hearings are not yet scheduled for this bill. **BHAM strongly supports this bill and encourages advocacy efforts to move it forward.**
2. [HB230](#) from Representative Caferro was also heard at the Health and Human Services Committee on January 22nd. This bill would also remove the sunset, as well as job requirements, and make Medicaid continuous for 12 months. Additional hearings are not yet scheduled for this bill. **BHAM strongly supports this bill and encourages advocacy efforts to move it forward.**
3. [SB62](#) from Senator Glimm proposes the phase out of Medicaid Expansion over with no new members being approved. This bill was heard on January 22nd in the Senate Public Health, Welfare, and Safety Committee. Numerous opponents spoke against this bill and no proponents spoke in favor. Additional hearings are not yet scheduled for this bill. **BHAM strongly opposes this bill and encourages advocacy efforts to oppose it.**
4. [SB199](#), from Senators Trebas and Emmrich, proposes complicated additional requirements and taxes for Medicaid Expansion. Senator Buttrey spoke eloquently when introducing his HB245 about how unnecessary these types of bills were for the program. This bill will be heard Monday in the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee. Additional hearings are not yet scheduled for this bill. **BHAM strongly opposes this bill and encourages advocacy efforts to oppose it.**

Here is a licensure bill that we're following:

1. [SB140](#) carried by Senator Kerr-Carpenter would adopt the social work licensure compact. This would allow for social workers from other states to become licensed in Montana, similar to the nursing compact already adopted. This bill was heard on January 29th in the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee. No other hearings are yet scheduled. **BHAM strongly supports this bill and encourages advocacy efforts to move it forward.**

