



GALLATIN COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH LOCAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

LAC Minutes – February 2026

Call to order: Erin Taylor called meeting to order on Monday February 9, 2026 at 12:08pm.

Roll call

- Voting Members: Erin Taylor, Lori Christenson, Yvonne Rudman, Shawna Lockhart, Todd Lester, Jennifer Boyer, Nicole Madden, Rick Gale, Margaret Kachadurian, Amanda Roesenkoetter, Susan Gregory, Melany Swenson,
- Non-Voting Members:
- Guests: Johanna Bertken-Bozeman School District; Kirsten Smith- Gallatin Behavioral Health Coalition; Maria Crocco, nurse practitioner student

Approval of the minutes: Notes from January meeting not received for review prior to February meeting. Nicole M to resend and group to review and approve at March meeting with February minutes.

Public Comment- none brought forth at today's meeting

Committee reports and Updates-

Strategic Planning Committee: self-driving now, nothing new to report

Membership Committee: looking for someone to run this committee. Malcolm Horn has applied pending county review. Max Albers has left committee.

Accounting

Central Service Area Authority: newsletters available for different state entities to be shared by Nicole when available.

Gallatin Behavioral Health Coalition: 70-200 kids a day to be receiving services at the new youth campus pending the transfer of the deed in spring 2026. Post-Crisis services will start in next 12-18 months. Recovery Point offers a walk-in peer service at 7000 N 7th. Funded by HRSA grant through Greater Impact. Also offering peer through Rimrock at this space.

Gallatin County Commission: Request to County to discuss how county supports various mental health programs through funding. Jennifer provided document with table outlining how funding spent by county to support the various mental health programming county wide. County has identified behavioral health as a priority so utilizing general tax funding to support various behavioral health programs in general.

Media Committee

Unfinished business

Website Development: Amanda Menasco

- Has made some edits to the website to ensure emails with agenda/minutes and such are going out to the leaders.
- Added upcoming events and created form to use to submit upcoming events to post on the website. Will be adding an option to upload an image for those with a flyer for the event.
- Now have new facebook and Instagram pages- access to follow via the link on the bottom of the website.
- Email to use to contact Amanda: Info@gcmhlac.com

New business

Upstream Youth Programs in Bozeman Schools: Johanna Bertken

- Discussion with Johanna Bertken re Bozeman Public School Mental Health Resources:
 - Request from LAC for Bozeman public school to provide an update on work being done in the school system. Johanna is student coordinator for Bozeman public school and works with students and staff for mental health related concerns, prevention, screening, and coordinating crisis response to events or concerns.
 - Current systems being used:
 - Multi-Tiered System of supports: all students get general curriculum and then, based on data, identify those not meeting central standards and provide additional supports for success. Using Second Step and Wayfinder as foundation curriculum systems for teaching social/emotional learning. These two platforms align with evidence-based practices, national standards, and research on best methods to teach social/emotional learning in schools. Right now, working on developing and implementing standards/expectations for what social/emotional/behavioral standards look like at each age/grade. Intent is to break down silos and increase supports as students flow through the system. Academic model for behavior education.
 - Tier 1- all students access to general curriculum on social/emotional learning. Usually using single tool covering broad range of social/emotional skills

- Tier 2- 20% of population- may need some additional interventions to succeed with social/emotional learning curriculum. Increased structure/reinforcement, identification of specific skills or behaviors requiring intervention, coping skills, communication tools, staff plans for addressing behavioral concerns, etc Supplemental curriculums chosen based on the individual needs for these students requiring additional intervention.
- Tier 3- those that require more comprehensive supports than tier 1 or 2 like behavior plans, reinforcement structure to encourage positive behavior, targeted intervention, school based outpatient therapy, individual counseling, school counselor support, additional curriculum, additional structure, IEP, etc

○Questions/Comments:

- Prevention in terms of substance use (DARE programs, other prevention programs) and the use of school resource officers. DARE program was specific to certain substances and abstinence. Current best practice is to teach social skills, social awareness, behavior management and data suggests this impacts social-emotional learning more impactful than abstinence-based programs increasing prevention and better choices.
- SRO's employ a tri-fold model where they interact as law enforcement, counselors, and peers.
- School has seen rates of vaping dropping significantly but unsure of correlation with programming vs use of nicotine oral pouches or if rates of tobacco use down in general. Data gathered by discipline rates of violations being addressed.
- Margaret K offers MT Mindfulness Project will be hosting a Mindful Parents program 7-8pm on Wednesday evening for next 6 weeks. Details and zoom link can be found on the MT Mindfulness webpage.
- Many school systems working to implement similar models as Bozeman in response to data surrounding kids and their behavioral health needs as well as best practices for social-emotional learning.
- Has Bozeman School District seen any reduction in violence (bringing guns to school, fighting, bullying, etc)? Plenty of things to feel hopeful about in terms of violence and threats to others. Johanna involved in threat assessment procedures across the school system with inter-disciplinary processes for following up and monitoring any threats to self or threats to others. School system able to conduct assessments with targeted interventions to address any threats, concerns, or risks. Interventions align with Multi-Tier programming. They are finding they are able to intervene earlier and screen for risks before becoming more serious scenarios.

- Question about how MT compares to other states in the nation in terms of suicide rates in school aged children. School tracks self-reported data on suicide thinking and attempts within the last year, but does not report out current suicide death rates because the N size is small enough to be identifiable and can't maintain privacy. They do note the number of students self-reporting attempts within the last year has gone up and is increasing and there seems to be higher correlation between those self-reporting symptoms of depression and suicide attempts. Will continue to monitor trends to see if true correlation occurs. Survey conducted of 100 kids in each grade. Because of survey volumes will monitor trends over time rather than rely on any one survey results per year. Todd offers that data surrounding suicide related deaths can be found through the state.
- Lori C requests that Bozeman School District share the data for a better visual of statistics.
- From Chat from Kirsten Smith: In the past 13 years, Montana children died by suicide at a higher rate than all US children.[1],[2] Montana's 2021-2023 teen suicide rate is more than three times the national average (36.7 per 100,000 in Montana compared to 10.2 nationally).[3]
 - https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/publichealth/Epidemiology/VSU/Child_Suicide_2013_2022_final.pdf
 - https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/teen_suicide/MT
 - https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/teen_suicide/MT#measure-trend-summary
 - Statistics on Youth Suicide: Page 26: <https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/YRBS/2023YRBS/YRBS%20County%20Level%202023.pdf?ver=2024-03-26-102959-220>
- Youth Resilience project: focused on upstream community-based prevention and supports in collaboration with schools to increase/encourage capacity within the adults in the community to support needs of youth by creating an increased skill set amongst adults.

Agenda Suggestions

Announcements:

- Todd Lester- opened new clinic in Kalispell. Had event to tour and have thus far toured about 200 people. Also had event to recognize 3 veterans over the age of 100 in the Kalispell area. Todd notes we have lost 66 veterans in the last year

across the state- noted that many death certificates have come in from small communities and may not be attached to services so Todd has some resources to connect with services or resources. Will be offering more training and meetings to engage veterans and their families. MT VA currently service more than 50,000 veterans across 18 sites.

Adjournment