



GALLATIN COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH LOCAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

LAC Minutes – April 2026

Mental Health Local Advisory Council
April 13, 2026

Call to order- E Taylor called to order 12:02 pm

Roll call- completed by N Madden

Present: Erin Taylor, Malcom Horn, Todd Lester, Yvonne Rudman, Margaret Kachadurian, Nicole Madden, Jennifer Boyer, Ryan Mattson, Rick Gale, Ben Frentsos, Shawna Lockhart, Lori Shanahan

Absent: Andrea Lower, Lori Christenson, Anthea George, Eric Szemes, Susan Gregory, Tom Peluso, Amanda Rosenkoetter, Chad Berg, Bekki McLean

Guests: Johanna Bertken, Kirsten Smith

Approval of the minutes: Approval of minutes for Jan/Feb/March 2026

Public Comment- no public comment

Committee reports and Updates

Strategic Planning Committee: have not met to review status of current plan. Strategy planning committee plans to meet before May meeting for review and updates.

Membership Committee: have 2 consumer positions, long standing city commission position, and now have received resignation from Melanie Swenson from child/mental health services. Looking to fill open positions if anyone has any potential interested candidates, please encourage application. Open city position is appointed by city for 1 year term. J Boyer to follow up with City. Elise Sabin from One Health is here to observe for representation from their organization seat at LAC. August 2026 is end of E Taylors second term as chair and Ryan Mattson's term as vice chair. LAC will need to consider candidates for taking on the chair position.

Accounting: no accounting representative

Central Service Area Authority: LAC outcomes report for July 2025-June 2026 will be due soon. N Madden to start the document and send to chair for review and

completion. N Madden to send attachments and links to articles for LAC members to review.

Gallatin Behavioral Health Coalition: a lot of grant writing happening right now. City of Bozeman submitted a BJA grant application for \$3 million over 3 years to support crisis system care including possible crisis receiving observation services. Funding is also written in to grant for wrap around treatment and housing services for people coming into the community and system. City of Belgrade submitting a children's health services grant for \$4 million over 4 years to support upstream and early childhood interventions to support “littles” with needs including one on one aides, home visiting, screenings, case management, and other services. City of Bozeman and City of Belgrade have stepped up to partner on grant writing and fiduciary services to reduce some of the administrative burden for county commission and increase community collaboration on the work being done.

Gallatin County Commission: Grants department is short staffed right now so partnering with city to load balance grant administration. County also exploring adjusting administrative fees from just under 6% to 10-15% to encourage growth and extension of support services for grant administration. County in early stages of budgeting for next fiscal year and is hoping to continue support for Bozeman Health for emergency detention beds. County has received 3 qualified applicants for open commission position and is working through process for review of the candidates and receive public comment.

Media Committee: Amanda provided updates on website- added links to social media pages as first step to increase social media presence. Amanda creating stories based on content from meetings that will feed social media and website new page. We have had a few emails or submissions through the form to add events to the calendar of events page on website. Old facebook page has been closed so will have to follow new facebook page through website link to connect and follow.

Unfinished business

New business

Veterans' Affairs: Todd Lester/Katie West—Suicide Prevention for Veterans in MT Provided presentation on suicide rates and prevention for Montana. In 2024, MT lost 20 veterans, 2025 MT lost 62 veterans to all causes. In YTD 2026 MT has lost 8-10 veterans thus far. Acknowledging current world events may be triggering for our veterans, especially those who served in Afghanistan, Iraq, etc. Scope of MT VA has significantly expanded to be the largest catchment area in lower 48 state with 65k veterans receiving care including 30+ programs across the state. Current model has 18 community-based clinic sites and telehealth-based support to address needs closer to home rather than having to travel to the hospital in Helena. Also has access to many different free apps downloadable by all for use. Services available are “whole person”

based including medical, mental health, recreation support, PT/OT, massage, mindfulness, etc. Veterans may display resistance to establishing care and utilizing VA services, especially for mental health, but once connected and supported become strong advocates for care- stigma is a part of the challenge along with paperwork and government processes to navigate, they may be at different stages of readiness for support and services. It is a federal law that veterans receive care through the VA if they request care and can't be turned down or prohibited from care for any reason. Through community partnerships, veterans can be referred to for care in community or private settings based on need, availability, timelines to care, etc. Vet Centers will be available in Bozeman soon

Community Communications Campaign – Phone Free Schools and Mental Health

Kirsten Smith and Johanna Bertken: Bozeman School District is moving to limit screen time and social media access during the school day recognizing impact on the brain and mental health. Shared presentation on impacts of dopamine neurotransmitters from screen time- reward system of the brain- and impacts on brain health and function. Powerpoint with youth/adolescent specific data shared and will be provided to LAC members. Ask of LAC following presentation is to support the advisory committee addressing phone use and screen time to support the parents and community in supporting the changing norms. Looking for a team of 5-6 community members to support the work and participate in the advisory committee.

Announcements

Adjournment: E Taylor adjourned at 1:36 pm.