Montana has a great opportunity to make sure more of its citizens are able to live in their own homes and communities while still receiving the services they need to live. And the people who will receive those services, along with their friends and family members, need to act now to make sure their will is reflected so Montana will make this opportunity successful!

In April, the state was awarded a planning grant to study the Money Follows the Person Rebalancing Demonstration (MFP) program.

This planning grant for the MFP program reflects growing agreement that long-term supports must be transformed from being institutionally-based and provider driven to person-centered, consumer directed and community-based.

The MFP program will allow more people to live at home, and transition out of institutions such as nursing homes, which is the best thing for Montanans and will allow the state to follow through with the least restrictive setting mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Supreme Court’s Olmstead decision.

The primary goals of the MFP program are to:

- Increase the use of Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) and reduce the use of institutionally-based services;
- Eliminate barriers that prevent or restrict the flexible use of Medicaid funds to allow Medicaid-eligible individuals to receive long-term care in the settings of their choice;
- Strengthen the ability of Medicaid programs to ensure continued provision of HCBS to those individuals who choose to transition from institutions; and
- Guarantee that procedures are in place to make sure HCBS is functional and continually improving.

Although successful application of this grant will ultimately strengthen all our communities, certain populations will be the program’s primary targets to transition into the community, including:

- Persons in Montana Developmental Center (MDC),
- Persons with Severe Disabling Mental Illness (SDMI) in nursing homes,
- Persons with physical disabilities and elders in nursing homes,
- Persons with complex needs in nursing homes, including those with traumatic brain injury,
- Persons who are 18-21 years old in the State Hospital, and
• Youth in Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF).

As part of this planning process, the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) established an MFP Stakeholder Advisory Council. This council and the public input it receives will shape the program between now and August 8, when the grant application is due.

That’s where you come in. Your input is greatly needed to shape the programs and services that Montanans receive to make their inclusion into our homes and communities possible. Money Follows the Person and other HCBS long-term care programs are on the verge of changing and now is the time to get your thoughts and suggestions to those developing the program, before the grant application is submitted.

If you are interested in contributing to this process, please contact Mike Mayer at Summit Independent Living Center at (406) 728-1630 or mmayer@summitilc.org as soon as possible. Your voice matters!

**Proud Moments in Summit’s History**

**1990**  Americans with Disabilities Act passed  
- Paves the way for people with disabilities to be equal partners in their community

**1992**  Summit adds satellite offices  
- New buildings and staff for Flathead, Lake and Ravalli counties

**1995**  Self-Directed Personal Assistance Program established in Montana  
- Allows people to direct their own self-care while staying in their own homes

**1997**  State Building Codes Statutes amended  
- Requires exterior feature access so people can enter buildings

**Self-Directed Personal Assistance added as a Summit Service**

**2003**  Building Advocacy and Learning Leadership Skills Class begins  
- Youth with disabilities are taught self-advocacy and rights

**2008**  Youth Opening Doors through Advocacy started  
- Allows youth to socialize and tackle community issues

**2009**  Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities passed  
- Allows people who need it to buy-in to Medicaid while working

2012 is a banner year for Summit as we celebrate 30 years of advocacy and service for people with disabilities in western Montana. Originally founded as a department of Community Medical Center (CMC), our first services were offered in early 1982. In the beginning, we were able to assist dozens of consumers over the course of a year.

Since then we’ve separated from CMC to become our own private, non-profit organization and have grown substantially. In 1992 we added offices in Hamilton, Kalispell and Ronan to better serve our rural communities. Our ability to work with our community has grown too: last year, we served over 1,500 people.

Although we are honored by the advocacy success and service additions we have achieved through grassroots efforts, community partnerships and hard work, we know there is a lot more to be done.

Where do you want Montanans with disabilities to go in the next 30 years? Please join with Summit to make a positive change in our communities. We made it this far with your support, and we’ll need it still to keep making Montana an even better place to live for people with disabilities.

**Mike Mayer**  
*Director*  
*Summit Independent Living Center*
Ravalli County Update

*June 21, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.* – Summer Solstice Picnic at Three Sisters Group Picnic Site at Lake Como. Bring your favorite bag of chips to share with the group.

If anyone is interested in accessible float trips down the Bitterroot River, contact Mark Cash at 728-7339. Ravalli County peers have reservations for their float trip on July 7. Make your reservations now!

*July 15* – Bitterroot Land Trust Bike Tour – Bitterroot Valley People First Aktion Club will be manning one of the check stations.

*July 28* – Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast – Bitterroot Valley People First Aktion Club will be helping with this pancake breakfast to be held downtown Hamilton during Daly Days.

*August 11* – The Man Cave, a support group for men with disabilities, is planning a Man Cave Cook-Out at Three Sisters Group Picnic Site at Lake Como. Mark your calendars, Joel will be calling with more details.

*August 24 – Summit Open House* – Celebrating 20 years of service in Ravalli County. Stop by and help us celebrate!

*August 29 to September 1* – Ravalli County Fair – Bitterroot Valley People First Aktion Club will be helping with Kiwanis Food booth, so stop in and enjoy some good food!

*September 11, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.* – Living Well with a Disability workshop begins. Classes will convene each Tuesday thereafter for 10 weeks.

Call us at 363-5242 if you would like additional information about any of the above activities.

And don’t miss “Tuesdays at Twelve” from June 19 through August 21 at Legion Park, 2nd Street and Bedford in Hamilton. Live entertainment, food vendors and fun for the entire family!

Joanne Verwolf, Ravalli County Coordinator
Flathead County Update

April – The Flathead office had a team compete in the Special Friends Wheelchair Basketball tournament. They didn’t win, but they were able to score respectfully. We hope to see them play again next year!

May 12 – A Murder Mystery party took place called “Death in Them Thar Hills.” The setting was at a gold mine in the southwest. We had some great players this time, with the banker and the school teacher getting kudos for the best costumes. After a couple of hours of questioning the suspects, everyone was quite surprised to discover who the murderer was—she had looked so innocent!

August 10, 4 - 7 p.m. – The Flathead County office is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. We will be having a picnic at Miracle Field (across the highway from FVCC) where we will will be providing a barbecue dinner starting at 4:30 p.m. We welcome all consumers, family members and community partners to come and celebrate with us. We will also be having a friendly game of wheelchair baseball on the Miracle Field. Wheelchairs will be provided for those who do not come equipped. Please RSVP by August 3 so we know how many to plan for.

Flo Kiewel, Flathead County Coordinator

Lake and Sanders Counties Update

June 8 – Summit 20th Anniversary/Graduation Party.

Twenty five people showed up to enjoy Subway sandwiches, meet each other, and learn what Summit can offer the community.

Thank you to all the people who came to join us from these groups and agencies: Salish Kootenai College, Mission Mountain Enterprises, People First and Life for the Nations.

June 9 – Summit’s Scott Williamson graduated from Salish Kootenai College with his A.A. in Psychology. Way to go Scott!

June 26 – The Rural Institute and Summit representatives from Sanders and Lake will have gone to the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribal Council seeking permission to include tribal members in several research projects. The first project, the Safer and Stronger Program, will have participants taking a health and wellness survey.

The second program, the Partnering Project, will involve people with developmental disabilities taking a health and safety survey.

To be involved in these important research projects, you can call Susan Morris in Missoula at 1 (800)398-9002 (toll-free) to schedule your appointment.

July 3 to July 8 – 114th Arlee Celebration Powwow (Free admission)

Michelle Williamson, Lake County Co-Coordinator
Susan Morris, Outreach Specialist
Missoula County Update

Summer Events:

July 13 – Summit Orientation – usually first Friday at 10 a.m. – contact Kathy

July 30 – Beginning Peer Training - held in Missoula office – contact Mary

August 6 – Epilepsy Support Group – every first Monday at 2 p.m. – contact Andrea

August 14 – Blind & Low Vision Support Group - every second Tuesday at 1 p.m. – contact Jude

Fall Classes:

Contact Kathy to RSVP by September 4 for the following classes:

September 4-6, 10 a.m. – Independent Living Fall Class orientation

September 10 to November 19, 10 a.m. – Living Well with a Disability class

September 11 to October 23, 10 a.m. – Working Well with a Disability class

Let Jude know if there are other topics that you would like to learn more about!

Youth:

July 16 to 20 – Montana Youth Leadership Forum in Helena – contact Mike Beers, Mary, Cara

October 17 – Disability Mentoring Day for Missoula High School Students – contact Mike Beers or Cara

November 14 to 16 – Montana Youth Conference in Great Falls – contact Mike Beers

Ongoing self advocacy resource assistance:

Do you want to understand more about income and benefits that you qualify for and how to apply for these resources? – contact Andrea, Darren or Susan

Vote in the General Election: Stay tuned for Missoula Candidate Forum dates

You have the right to vote by mail ballot or on November 6 in person!

Jude Monson, Program Manager

Everyone at Summit ILC would like to take this moment to congratulate these seven people in YODA Missoula who recently celebrated graduations. We know you will go on to do great things. Conquer your dreams; best wishes for the future!

Sentinel High: Bobby Kirwan
Justin Shackelford
Kelly Jo Glennon

Big Sky: Kaysee Bates

Hellgate: Sidney Watson

Frenchtown: Devin Lofthouse

University of Montana: Sierra Lode

Video Game Night is on the second Thursday of each month from 2-5:30 p.m. starting in July at the Missoula Office.

You are welcome to bring your own console, controllers and games for everyone to try, but it is not required. Come have some good food, play some great games and meet some awesome people!
Canids of Benevolence by Laurie Swanson

Hi there! I’m Laurie Swanson, a new peer advocate with Summit. As a native of Missoula, I enjoy what the area has to offer, especially the arts, markets and the outdoors. You will likely see me with my service dog, Kosha, a pretty little Australian Shepherd cross. Kosha and I have been a team for nearly four-and-a-half years. This brings me to the topic of my article: what is the difference between a therapy dog, a service dog, and a companion dog?

Therapy dogs are trained specifically to visit nursing facilities, care homes, group homes, hospitals, schools, and individual homes to provide socialization, therapeutic visits and comfort to those they visit. Therapy dogs are not allowed in public places such as restaurants, grocery stores and so on, and are not covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Service dogs, also called guide dogs or assistance dogs, undergo more training and are trained to assist with a task or tasks with which a disabled person needs help. Service dogs are trained to do tasks including: mobility assistance, psychiatric assistance, balance assistance, and picking up and retrieving objects. These dogs are protected under the ADA and are allowed in public places. Businesses cannot discriminate against someone on the basis of needing a service dog.

Companion dogs are not trained to perform specific tasks but provide emotional support to their owner. With a doctor’s prescription, or on recommendation from a therapist, companion dogs are allowed in housing units even when there is a “no pets allowed” policy, but are not protected under the ADA.

So, the difference between the three categories--therapy dog, service dog and companion dog--boils down to: purpose/job, and degree and style of training.

Thanks to Leanne Beers for her input on this article! Hope this helps with any questions there may be out there. And it’s great to be a part of the Summit family!
**Assistive Equipment and Financing**

If you have assistive technology (AT) for sale, exchange, or give away that you no longer need or if you are seeking equipment someone else may have available, visit MonTECH’s statewide online equipment exchange. You may find equipment to benefit you or a buyer for equipment you no longer need.

Visit:
http://montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/mtdb/index.asp
Or call:
(406) 243-5751 / (877)243-5511 (in-state toll-free)

If you are in need of financial assistance to buy assistive technology (AT) or pay related expenses, contact MonTECH to learn more about their low-interest financial loan program.

Visit:
http://montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/Financial_Loan.asp
Or call:
(406) 243-5751 / (877) 243-5511 (in-state toll-free)

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**Vestil 1000lb capacity lift**
Model #ehlt-6678-1-43. Operates on 115V, rain proof operation controller, 36 inch lift height, 2 removable rails, hinged ramp for easy loading/unloading, hardly used. $3700 OBO. Call 531-8588.

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**Levo Stand Up Chair**
(instruction manual included) for $2000.00 or offer. Call (406) 883-9298

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**Set of ramps for wheelchair/atv’s and a sliding bath/shower chair. Hoyer Lift.** Manual and hydraulic, good working order, 3 sets of slings, lift hooks and chains, scale for weighing patient. To learn more about these items, call Tony at (406)546-1570.

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**Rubbermaid long transfer bench**, adjustable legs, high white back. $35. Fred Sammons reacher $3. Call 251-2228.

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**Stair Lift by ThyssenKrupp Access**
A/C Powered, 300 lb lifting capacity, 60’ maximum travel, Unit depth: 13 ½” folded, 23 ¾ “ unfolded. Call (406) 961-2403 for more information.

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**Accessible Home**
- 2 bedroom, 1 bath, opening floor plan, includes wash room, small yard. One level. New roof and siding. Centrally located on a bus route in quiet neighborhood. $199,000. Carol Heath - 251-2228 or 529-1679.

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**Triple reclining bed**
Air Mattress to prevent bed sores, constant inflation. No siderails. Good shape. $500 OBO. Kay Henry (509) 703 2114

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**Wanted to Buy**
Used accessible van for transporting passenger in a wheelchair. Van must be an automatic. Call David or Patty at 257-8922.

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Have something you want to sell or give away or are you looking for a hard-to-find piece of equipment?

If so, list it here by contacting Justyn Field at (406) 728-1630 or e-mail jfield@summitilc.org.

Or, list and find those hard-to-find items on the Montech item exchange website at:
http://montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/mtdb/
How to Register to Vote

- Visit your county election office Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. and complete a registration form.

- Fill out and sign a voter registration card and drop it off at your county election office, or mail it to the county election administrator.

- Fill out and sign a registration form when you apply for or renew your driver’s license or Montana ID.

- You must provide your Montana driver’s license or Montana ID number when you register. If you do not have a Montana driver’s license, you will need to provide the last 4 digits of your Social Security number. If you have neither number, you will need to provide another form of identification.

- You will need to provide a residence address or specific geographic location information from which your residence address may be determined. The residence address must be in the county in which you are registering.

- The deadline for regular registration is 30 days before any election. If you miss that deadline, you can still register and vote in the election by late registering at your county election office.

Late registration is available at any time right up through the close of polls on election day. No absentee ballots are issued between noon and 5:00 p.m. the day before the election however, so if you haven’t registered before then, you probably want to wait until election day to register and vote.

Once you’ve registered, you’ll get a voter confirmation notice from your county election office verifying your registration and telling you which precinct and which polling place you vote in.

Voters with Disabilities

If you have a physical disability or are unable to read or write, you may ask an election judge to help you mark your ballot. Or, you can bring a friend or relative who, with the permission of the election judge, can go into the voting booth with you and help you vote.

Every polling place in Montana has at least one specialized voting machine, called an AutoMARK, that enables people with disabilities to vote independently and privately.

You may also designate an agent to assist you with the voting process. To find out more about AutoMARK or how to register to vote, please visit the Montana Voter page at:

http://sos.mt.gov/elections/Vote