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## **Health Department Receives Grant to Evaluate Replication of Foster Child Programs Throughout State**

The Missoula City-County Health Department has been awarded a two-year grant from the Montana Health Care Foundation to evaluate and prepare its model Foster Child Health Program for replication in other Montana communities.

Children who have the profound experiences that lead to and include removal from their home often face complex health needs. Yet, at the time the child is placed with the foster parent, the medical records and pattern of care the child needs is often incomplete, making it difficult for the foster parents, caseworker and health care providers to provide for the child's health needs.

The Foster Child Health Program brings a public health nurse into the child's care team to pull together and interpret the medical record, connect the child and foster family to various health and social services, and interpret and help the foster parent carry out the health care provider's treatment plans. The program is carried out in partnership with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), foster families and local health care providers.

"Our experience has been that bringing a public health nurse onto the child's care team improves the child's health. We are very appreciative of the opportunity this grant brings to assess the impact of the program and expand to other public health departments as a benefit to foster children in Montana," said Nikki Grossberg, deputy administrator of the DPHHS Child and Family Services Division.

The program is funded by DPHHS, the Missoula City-County Health Department and the Missoula County Commissioners. "Missoula County Commissioners support this innovative, effective program because it uses data to inform its strategy and practices," said Commissioner David Strohmaier. "We are excited to leverage the resources and focus of the Montana Health Care Foundation to see it implemented statewide."

The objectives of the \$69,653 grant are to complete an independent program evaluation of the model, submit the model for recognition as a promising practice, and prepare it to be replicated in other Montana communities. And the ultimate goal is to support foster parents in improving the health and well-being of the children they take into their homes and under their care.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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