



### **What's Up – A Newsletter from the UM School of Social Work**

Welcome to your monthly email from the University of Montana School of Social Work. We will highlight different happenings in our school and the social work field each month. We want to create a sense of connection and understanding of the many beautiful things happening at your school.

### **Advocacy Spotlight:**

#### ***Social Work Students – Advocate!***

##### **Montana ICWA:**

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), a federal law which seeks to protect tribal sovereignty and preserve American Indian and Alaska Native families involved in state child welfare systems, is under review by the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS). In November of 2023, SCOTUS heard [oral arguments](#) that questioned whether placement preference violates equal protection and whether requirements for active efforts, expert witness, and recordkeeping violate the Tenth Amendment. In response to the ongoing threat to ICWA, several states have codified their own ICWA laws to uphold the protections ICWA provides. [HB 317](#) is currently before the Montana legislature and if passed would likewise codify the tenants of ICWA into Montana Code Annotated. Check out [Turtle Talk](#), a blog on legal issues throughout Indian Country for a comprehensive list of active and pending state ICWA laws.

##### **Protect Our LGBTQIA2S Friends and Family Members!**

[Senate Bill 99](#), carried by Sen. John Fuller, would harm current and future trans, non-binary and two-spirit youth by taking away their access to lifesaving, gender-affirming healthcare including hormone blockers and hormone replacement. This is especially harmful to social workers as we would be banned from discussing pronouns or social transitions with youth in MT. This bill has passed the full senate and house and will go back to the senate for final approval (because of amendments). Please make your voice heard.

[Senate Bill 458](#), carried by Sen. Carl Glimm, would “define sex in Montana law” in a way that erases intersex people from the legal code, strips anti-discrimination protections away from intersex, trans, nonbinary, and Two Spirit people, prevents people from

receiving documentation that reflects their gender, and inserts a harmful and biologically inaccurate definition of "sex" into Montana law.

**Please send a message to your Representative via [this online form](#) or the Capitol Switch Board at 406-444-4800 and let them know how you feel about SB 458 and SB 99.**

Other legislation to watch: [NASW Montana Bill List](#)

### **Research Corner:**

**Our own Dr. Jessica Liddell recently published the following two research articles:**

**Liddell, J. L.** (2023). Birth Control Access Experiences of Indigenous Women in the United States Gulf Coast. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 96, 110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2022.102667>

**Liddell, J. L.,** \*Kington, S.G., & McKinley, C. E. (2022). "We Live in a Very Toxic World": Changing Environmental Landscapes and Indigenous Food Sovereignty. *Studies in Social Justice*, 16(3), 571-590.  
<https://doi.org/10.26522/ssj.v16i3.2746>

### **BSW Information:**

### **Faculty News:**

Assistant Professor and In-person MSW Program Lead, Jen Molloy, PhD, MSW, is serving as the lead evaluator on a \$3 million-dollar Health Resource and Service Administration (HRSA) grant awarded to the Center for Children, Families and Workforce Development to develop the Community Health Worker Training Program. This grant leverages a partnership with the newly created UM Office of Health and Partnership (OHRP) and the UM School of Public Health and Community Health Sciences. Community health workers provide a valuable contribution to the workforce, and the Community Health Worker Training Program will bolster this growing workforce to directly address health disparities, improve access to social services and healthcare, and increase community capacity. Congratulations Dr. Molloy!

Warmly,

Amanda Cahill  
MSW Director  
Clinical Assistant Professor

[amanda.cahill@mso.umt.edu](mailto:amanda.cahill@mso.umt.edu)



