



# Parent Influence: Why it has to be you

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**PLUK Training  
Billings MT  
March 9-10, 2004**

**Mary Noel**

DPHHS—Health Care Resources Bureau

406-444-6992 [manoel@state.mt.us](mailto:manoel@state.mt.us)



# Outline

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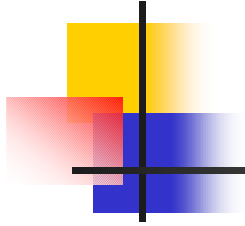
- Montana's Legislature
- State agencies & the session
- How to influence a bill
- State policies and procedures
- ARMs: Administrative Rules of Montana
- Routine issues



# Montana's Legislature

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- Citizen legislature
- Meets in odd-numbered years for 90 days, beginning 1<sup>st</sup> work day in January
- Interim committees meet between sessions
  - Request studies
  - Gather information
  - Make recommendations



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- One citizen can make a difference
  - State employees have little power
  - Paid lobbyists have some power
  - Citizens, especially if coordinated, have lots of power



# State agencies & the session

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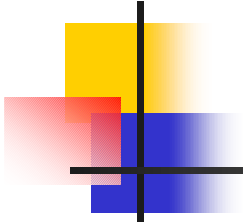
- Process begins now (early March)
- Recommendations for Governor's budget start the process
- Many items are recommended at the Bureau level
- Few items make the cut to the Governor's budget office



# How to influence a bill

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- Talk to your senator and representative to make sure they understand the bill's implications
- Talk to the sponsor
- Talk to lobbyists, both sides
- Offer amendments if necessary
- Testify, or write testimony for someone who will



Check progress:

[http://laws.leg.state.mt.us/pls/laws03/law0203w\\$.startup](http://laws.leg.state.mt.us/pls/laws03/law0203w$.startup)

Celebrate successes

Thank everyone who helped



# Administrative Rules (ARMs)

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- Most programs open rules at least annually
- Ask to be added to interested parties list
- Citizens can comment on rule changes, or offer changes of their own
- Citizens can attend rule hearings and offer testimony and written comments



# State policies & procedures

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- All meetings are open to the public
- To influence policy:
  - Who runs the program?
  - Is there an advocacy group involved?
  - When & where are meetings held?
  - How can you participate?
  - What if you feel shut out of the process?



# Routine issues

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- Identify problem
- Talk to others who may have the same issue
- Develop solution, if possible
- Contact program officer or supervisor of the program
- Follow up



# You are the expert!

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- Voice concerns
- Target those who can initiate change
- Keep bridges intact
- Find allies in unusual places
- Stay focused and positive
- Never give up!