



## Volume 4

As restrictions ease, and summer arrives, there are a number of meaningful, quick actions each of us can take, noted below.

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## Executive Director of Environmental Stewardship

After 25 years working in sustainability in healthcare, Beth Schenk, PhD, RN, of Missoula MT is now in a new position overseeing stewardship for the 51 hospitals, 1000+ clinics, and 119,000 caregivers throughout the Providence Healthcare System.



In this time of COVID with physical and economic hardship affecting billions, Dr. Schenk sees a potential positive – a

chance to reset and remember what is most important, questioning the negatives of business as usual. "The shortages of PPE remind us that we can conserve, using our resources more wisely," she notes. "Before the pandemic, this may have felt too inconvenient, too difficult. Now we see many innovative solutions and more people realize that it is necessary. By working through the challenges, we practice more safely, with less cost, while conserving the earth's resources."

She celebrates the joy of living in Montana with her family, friends, and pets – hiking, gardening, hockey, aikido, and music.

[More on Dr. Schenk's accomplishments here](#)

# Climate Change and Human Health in Montana: a Special Report of the Montana Climate Assessment

Draft is available for public comment beginning June 3.

[Draft report and comment form](#)

# Montana HPHC speaks up for science, public health and equity



## Letter to Congress: COVID-19, Climate and Health

*Montana HPHC joined other health groups representing over 600,000 physicians asking Congress to use the massive investments of the coronavirus response legislation wisely to build resilience in the face of these climate-related public health threats.*



## Joint Letter Censoring Science

Montana HPHC joined 55 public health, medical, academic, and scientific groups in opposing

the EPA transparency rule .

Under this rule, EPA would give greater consideration to any kind of study in which the raw data are publicly accessible.

However, many studies — public health research in particular — have data that are not meant to be public, since they involve individuals who allow for use of their personal health information only if the details of their lives are kept confidential.

4/22 Julia Ryder and new board member Sarah Lorch presented a health and climate to the Sigma Tau nursing fraternity in Bozeman

4/22 Dr. Beth Schenk was promoted to Executive Director of Environmental Stewardship for the Providence Healthcare.

4/22 Lori Byron presented on an Earth Day Academy of Pediatrics [climate and health webinar](#)

4/23 Drs. Lori and Rob Byron met (virtually) with the Healthy Communities Coalition of Helena.

4/24 Dr. Rob Byron's OpEd appeared in the Missoulian, the Billings Gazette and the Big Horn County News [https://missoulian.com/opinion/columnists/pandemic-an-opportunity/article\\_3d0bd56d-1ebc-534a-96d9-730dba42ff8e.html](https://missoulian.com/opinion/columnists/pandemic-an-opportunity/article_3d0bd56d-1ebc-534a-96d9-730dba42ff8e.html)

5/18 5 members of MontanaHPHC gave oral testimony to EPA regarding the revision of the Particulate Matter air standards

5/19 Drs. Rob and Lori Byron met with members of Montana's Congressional delegation (virtually) representing the [Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health](#).

Board member Dr. Mari Eggers continues to serve on the Gallatin County Health Board and assist in this COVID era

## Relevant Actions for Us to Take:



### Protect Net Metering

There is currently a petition before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that would effectively kill net metering, the distribution and financing system that makes rooftop solar affordable and accessible. [Consider sending this quick letter to FERC today](#), created



### Sign a Petition to Congress for Social Responsibility

COVID has revealed huge inequities. [By signing this Health Professionals petition](#), Washington State PSR will send your request to our (Montana) members of Congress, requesting that, for any further recovery -health is a priority, -economic

by the Western  
Organization of Resource  
Councils.



## VOTE for the Public Service Commission

Take the time to research  
your candidates for  
[Montana's Public Service  
Commission](#) (PSC). The  
PSC has the power to  
shape Montana's energy  
future.

If we care about the  
climate, we need to  
[VOTE](#) and [to remind our  
friends to vote!](#)



relief goes directly to  
individuals, -work toward  
a regenerative economy  
to help prevent future  
pandemics and lessen  
climate change.

## Tell Congress: Don't Weaken the Clean Air Act

10 Montana counties  
received "F's" in the [2020  
State of the Air](#) report.  
[Please take a moment to  
send a critical message  
to Congress](#), asking them  
not to weaken the Clean  
Air Act

### Learning Corner

#### [\*\*Air pollution linked to increased COVID mortality\*\*](#)

Harvard Researchers found that an increase of only 1  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  in PM<sub>2.5</sub> is associated with an 8% increase in the COVID-19 death rate (95% confidence interval [CI]: 2%, 15%).

Just one more way that air pollution affects our lives, and disproportionately, the lives of more vulnerable populations.

### Student Corner

As a senior MSU nursing student, I am ecstatic to share a recent perspective. I lost my voice for a bit, drowning in the new reality of online virtual simulations in nursing school with video-game looking

patients during COVID-19 closures. I remember gripping my road bike handles, looking out of tear-stained eyes, feeling bitter and guilty about my inability to find application to content I was learning.

I won't forget the day where I first had a zoom school group dialogue with a kid's statement, "Climate change isn't a bipartisan issue" and then proceeding into a webinar where the presenter answered the question, "What does being an environmentalist mean?" with the answer, "to be a human on planet earth".

"This is not a partisan debate; instead it is a human one. Clean air and water, and a livable climate are inalienable human rights. Solving this crisis is not a question of politics but our moral obligation. We have a profound responsibility to the fragile web of life on this Earth." -Leonardo Dicaprio

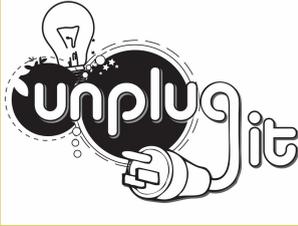
Flash forward a couple quarantine-themed days later. I never knew 15 attentive faces in separate boxes on Zoom could make me sit up and feel the strength of my own voice. In this moment I became a human bridge; a passionate public health expert's narrative on the complex reality of our broken system reached my cohort of bright-eyed nursing students who have careers ahead of them to make necessary changes.

I think more of us need to be bridges. We need to make communication feel sturdy and safe between those who have hard-earned stories to share with those with bright ideas and energy to make them reality. It is imperative for leaders like Jon Tester, Steve Daines and Greg Gianforte to link people's dreams together by highlighting the shared human experience.

My request to you. Find a bridge in a daily commute and ask, "Can I reinforce and patch the current bridge that lies ahead of me for those who follow?" Take it upon yourself to complete one of the relevant actions above.

Thanks!

Sarah Lorch



## Vampire Energy

One-third of the energy we pay for in our homes is wasted. Vampire Energy refers to the electricity many gadgets and appliances waste just by being plugged in. Computers, TV's, cable & satellite modems are some of the worst offenders, consuming energy even when turned off. A computer charger, plugged in but not attached to a computer, wastes half the amount of energy it does when actually charging a computer.

### Montana Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate

P.O. Box 1972  
Red Lodge, Montana  
59068

info@montanahphc.org

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