



The Governor's Task Force on Children at Risk
June 5, 2026
Salmon, ID/ Hybrid

Nadine McDonald, Juvenile Justice (Chairman)
Andie Blackwood- DHW, Family & Children Services
(A)Lena Biondolillo- Children with Disabilities
Sheila Sturgeon Freitas, PhD– Mental Health
Curtis Carper- Law Enforcement
(A)Anthony Henry– Foster Youth
Jill Robertson – Homeless Youth Liaison
(A)Trevor Sparrow– Parent
Susan Nalley– Victim Services Coordinator

Jennifer Tachell– Educator (Vice- Chairman)
(A)Susan Bradford, MD – Pediatrician
OPEN- Child Advocate Attorney
Hon. Steve Clark- Civil Magistrate Judge
Kyle Bringham- Prosecuting Attorney
(A)Tahna Barton – CASA
(V)Hon. Brent Ferguson- Crim. Magistrate Judge
(A)Joshua Wickard- Public Defender
Teresa Vance- Administrator of the Courts

Mindy Peper – Task Force Support
(A)Rachael Lilya- Task Force Support

Indicates Absent (A) Virtual (V)

Guests: *Patrick Reagan, Executive Director, The Mahoney House; Kelly McNitt, Chief Nursing Officer, Steele Memorial Hospital; Ashley Stallings, Executive Director, Upper Valley Child Advocacy Center; CARTF candidate, Josh Mills*

Meeting Purpose: *Review task force operations and hear from rural community partners regarding child advocacy, multidisciplinary team collaboration, homelessness, healthcare, and service delivery challenges in rural Idaho.*

Key Takeaways

- Lemhi County MDT identified the need for formal protocols and confidentiality agreements to facilitate information sharing and address HIPAA concerns among community partners.
- The task force approved a \$15,000 conference hotel deposit and up to \$5,000 for keynote speaker Lori Poland's books to utilize available funds before September 30.
- Upper Valley Child Advocacy Center reported a 96% increase in first-quarter caseloads and highlighted statewide funding, prevention, and mental health service challenges.
- Steele Memorial Hospital emphasized barriers to MDT participation, including confidentiality concerns, limited staffing, and lack of written protocols.
- The task force approved changes to leadership succession planning and moved toward a quarterly meeting schedule beginning in 2027.

Topics

Welcome and Minutes

- Meeting called to order following introductions and confirmation of a quorum.
- Meeting norms were reviewed.
- **May 1, 2026 Minutes Approval:**
 - **Motion:** Teresa Vance moved to accept the minutes with minor changes.
 - **Second:** Jill Robertson seconded the motion.
 - **Outcome:** Motion passed unanimously. The minutes were approved.

Budget Updates

- The budget reflected approximately \$4,300 in additional available funds.
- Grant funds have not yet been distributed.
- Members were reminded to submit travel reimbursement forms to Karla by June 10 using the updated mileage reimbursement form.
- Approximately \$60,000 remains available to expend prior to September 30.

Budget Motions

- **Approve a \$15,000 conference hotel deposit.**
 - **Motion:** Andi Blackwood
 - **Second:** Teresa Vance.
 - **Outcome:** Motion passed unanimously.
- Keynote Speaker Book Purchase. Discussion centered on purchasing Lori Poland's books for conference attendees and giveaways. **Authorize expenditure of up to \$5,000 for bulk purchase of Lori Poland's books.**
 - **Motion:** Jill Robertson
 - **Second:** Jen Tachell
 - **Outcome:** Motion passed unanimously.

The Mahoney House- *Patrick Reagan, Executive Director and team*

- **Organization:** Salmon-based domestic violence, sexual assault, and child advocacy organization working toward full Child Advocacy Center (CAC) accreditation.
- **Growth:** Significant increase in forensic interview referrals after promoting their trained interview team to law enforcement and prosecutors.
- **Services Provided:**
 - Forensic interviews
 - Family advocacy and case support
 - Therapy through a contracted counselor
 - Case management
 - School-based social-emotional learning programs
 - Basic needs assistance (gas cards, food, clothing, emergency support)

- **Rural Challenges:** Long travel distances, limited resources, staffing shortages, CPS availability issues, and difficulty connecting families with services.
- **Service Gaps:** Ongoing need for resources for children with problematic behaviors and sibling-on-sibling abuse cases.
- **Community Engagement:** Strong emphasis on relationship-building through school outreach, community events, parades, and fundraisers.
- **Facilities:** Expanded from a small house into a larger office space with improved privacy, counseling rooms, and a playground.
- **Training:** Staff are trained forensic interviewers who participate in ongoing peer review and continuing education.
- **SART/Medical Response:** Working to improve sexual assault response and timely access to SANE exams, particularly for children.

Homeless Youth Update- *Jill Robertson*

- **Barriers for Students:**
 - Lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
 - Missing documents such as proof of residence, birth certificates, and immunization records
 - Frequent school transitions
 - Transportation challenges
 - Food insecurity, hygiene needs, and overall instability
- **School Stability:** A primary focus is helping students remain in their school of origin when housing changes occur to minimize educational disruption.
- **School-Based Supports:**
 - Food pantries
 - Clothing and shoes
 - School supplies
 - Hygiene products
 - Gas cards and emergency assistance
- **Community Partnerships:** Highlighted a successful school pantry and giving tree program supported by community donations and strong family engagement.
- **Family Perspectives:** Shared a video featuring parents who described the positive impact of school stability and McKinney-Vento services on their children and families.

Steele Memorial Hospital Update- *Kelly McNitt, Chief Nursing Officer*

- **Community Role:** The hospital is the only hospital in Salmon and sees potential value in a future Family Justice Center, though planning is still in the early stages.
- **SANE/Forensic Exam Challenges:**
 - A SANE nurse is available on call, but no formal SANE exam has been conducted in nearly two years.
 - Pediatric sexual assault exams are particularly difficult due to staffing limitations and logistical challenges.
- **Small-Town Barriers:**
 - Concerns about confidentiality and HIPAA compliance
 - Fear of gossip and loss of privacy within the community

- Perception that sensitive information quickly becomes public knowledge
 - Difficulty ensuring information is shared only on a need-to-know basis
- **Need for MDT Structure:** The hospital identified a need for a formal multidisciplinary team (MDT) protocol outlining:
 - Who participates in meetings
 - What information can be shared
 - The hospital's role in the response process
 - Procedures to prevent inappropriate disclosure of information
- **Resource Gaps:**
 - Lack of a local CPS worker
 - Limited behavioral health services
 - Challenges coordinating child abuse response in a rural setting
- **Collaboration:** Hospital staff expressed interest in learning from counties and hospitals with established MDT models and adapting successful practices to fit Salmon's needs.

Strategy Shift

- Members reviewed proposed updates to leadership succession procedures.
 - Proposed changes include:
 - Chair appointment of Vice Chair.
 - Vice Chair succession into Chair position following completion of term.
 - Addition of an Ex-Chair advisory role to support continuity.
 - Alignment of leadership transitions with the October conference schedule.
- Nadine McDonald agreed to remain in chair position for one more year to support transition planning.
- Mindy Peper and Nadine McDonald will revise procedures language for review prior to the September meeting.
 - Meeting Schedule
- Members reviewed current meeting requirements and travel demands.
- Beginning in 2027, the task force will move to a quarterly meeting schedule:
 - March – Boise, Hybrid
 - June – Regional Meeting, hybrid
 - October (2 full days) – Boise Meeting, hybrid, and Conference
 - December – Boise, hybrid
- Members supported the revised schedule to improve efficiency and reduce travel costs.

Upper Valley Child Advocacy Center Update- Ashley Stallings, Executive Director and team

- **Funding Challenges:** Securing sustainable funding remains the organization's top concern. They are advocating for a dedicated state budget line item for Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) rather than relying on annual appropriations, noting that state statute requires CAC participation in MDTs.

- **Rapid Growth:** Caseloads continue to increase significantly, with a reported 96% increase in the first quarter compared to the previous year. Growth is driven by increased ICAC cases, greater public awareness, and increased use of accredited CAC interviews by law enforcement and prosecutors.
- **Staffing and Wellness:**
 - Team consists of five in-office staff and one virtual staff member.
 - Staff retention is a priority due to the impacts of secondary trauma and compassion fatigue.
- **Regional Service Area:** Serves six counties and participates in five MDT meetings each month.
- **MDT Successes:** MDTs are functioning well overall, though each county operates differently. Strong relationships among partners were identified as the primary reason for successful collaboration.
- **Service Gaps:**
 - Limited resources and guidance for sibling-on-sibling and child-on-child abuse cases.
 - Need for additional training and family supports when multiple children are affected.
 - Ongoing shortage of mental health providers despite some improvements through school-based counseling and mobile services.
- **Mobile CAC Unit:** A mobile CAC unit has significantly improved access in rural communities by providing space for forensic interviews, advocacy services, and medical evaluations.
- **Prevention and Outreach:** Staff provide Safer, Smarter Kids programming in schools and conduct community education and outreach activities.
- **Hope-Informed Culture:** The center intentionally creates a positive, trauma-informed environment that promotes healing and support for children, families, and staff.

Subcommittee Updates

- **Grant Subcommittee:**
 - The subcommittee is preparing to open the next grant cycle.
 - Members discussed updates to the grant application process, including the addition of required civil rights and drug-free workplace assurances.
 - Efforts are underway to streamline application materials and ensure compliance with state and federal requirements.
- **Legislative Committee:**
 - The committee is not currently meeting and remains on hiatus following the conclusion of the legislative session
- **MDT Subcommittee:**
 - Kyle Bringham reported that the subcommittee is working to bring MDT-specific training opportunities to Idaho.
 - Discussions are underway to host a prosecutor-focused MDT training at the Idaho Prosecuting Attorneys Association August conference.
 - If those plans are not finalized, the subcommittee has identified a backup trainer from Colorado to ensure training opportunities move forward.
 - The subcommittee continues to explore partnerships and training resources to strengthen MDT collaboration statewide.
- **Conference Subcommittee (October 2026):**
 - The subcommittee continues conference planning and logistics coordination for the October 2026 conference.
 - Riverside remains confirmed as the conference venue.
 - Planning is underway for additional speakers and experiential activities focused on resilience

and wellness.

- Potential activities include art, play, music, therapy dogs, and equine-assisted experiences
- 2027 Conference ideas were discussed- MDT training, roundtables for MDT region, documenting resources
- **CFRT:**
 - Lacey Williams represented the team at the Northwest Region Child Fatality Review Conference in Montana and provided an update on team successes and challenges.
 - The team continues discussions regarding infant autopsies and vitamin K testing.
 - Jimmy Roberts completed one of three CARTF-funded coroner conferences and will provide a summary in the fall.
 - Access to the National Center dataset remains pending while DHW adds an additional user.
 - The team will meet in August to complete 2025 case reviews and continue work on outstanding 2023–2024 reports.
 - Members discussed an upcoming ProPublica article, future grant opportunities, and succession planning related to upcoming retirements.

New Business

- Discussion occurred regarding conference planning, speaker coordination, scholarship opportunities, and collaboration with MDT partners.
- Members discussed future conference content related to positive childhood experiences, rural MDT development, and multidisciplinary collaboration.

Adjournment

Action Items

- Submit travel reimbursement forms to Karla by June 10.
- Contact Lori Poland regarding bulk book purchase and delivery timeline.
- Coordinate retirement recognition for Joshua Wickard.
- Share MDT protocols, HIPAA guidance, and confidentiality resources with Steele Memorial Hospital.
- Coordinate with Erica Brewer regarding Lemhi County MDT protocol development and a virtual visit in September
- Revise task force procedures regarding leadership succession and meeting structure.
- Develop crossover youth data questions and coordinate data collection with DHW.
- Continue planning for the October 2026 conference, including speaker coordination and scholarship opportunities.
- Assist with promotion of the Mahoney House October 3rd event.