

## RiverStone Health Connections



As winter settles in and the holidays draw near, we're reminded of the warmth that comes from connection and community.

At RiverStone Health, we're grateful for the partners, patients, and team members who bring light to this season and help us make a difference every day. Together, we continue to support the health and well-being of our community during this busy, meaningful time of year.

### RiverStone Health Service Spotlight: HIV Services

For more than two decades, RiverStone Health's HIV Services program has supported individuals living with and at risk for HIV throughout Eastern Montana. Our comprehensive approach is rooted in compassion and person-centered care that ensures every client receives high-quality medical, social and prevention services across the continuum of care.

Our program provides medical case management, financial assistance, medication access, prevention services and linkage to care. Through strong partnerships with community organizations, healthcare providers and harm-reduction programs across the region, our team works every day to reduce barriers and improve health outcomes for the people we serve.

One of our most significant accomplishments this year was ensuring that clients newly diagnosed with HIV entered medical care within 15 days of diagnosis. This is far faster than the national benchmark of 30 days for rapid linkage to care. Early engagement remains one of the strongest predictors of long-term viral suppression, and our team continues to prioritize swift, supportive connections to services.

Our Syringe Services Program (SSP), known to many as RISE, remains a vital harm-reduction resource in Eastern Montana, offering safer-use supplies, HIV, HCV, and syphilis testing, education and referrals to care and treatment.

Clients served through SSP consistently share that they feel safe, respected, and not judged when engaging with our team.

On December 1, our team participated in this year's World AIDS Day service, which held profound significance as we honored the loss of four clients and one team member, Jace Dyckman, over the past year.

This moment of remembrance reaffirmed our commitment to supporting clients, families, and one another with dignity and compassion through every stage of their journey.

Across all HIV Services, our dedicated team remains committed to reducing stigma and improving access to care throughout Eastern Montana.

[Click to learn more](#)



## Partner Spotlight: STEP



Support and Techniques  
for Empowering People

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the U.S. saw growing movements advocating for better treatment of people with developmental disabilities. At the time, most children with disabilities were sent to large state-run institutions, where they faced neglect, abuse and an environment focused only on basic custodial care. Families were often advised by professionals to institutionalize their children and move on, as communities were not equipped to support them.

Knowing the realities of institutional life, three Billings mothers of children with disabilities began meeting in the late 1960s and early

With support from other parents and advocates, they laid the groundwork for what became STEP in 1977, securing funding and creating community-based services so children could remain at home. By the late 1970s, they opened the first children's group home.

STEP expanded through the 1990s and 2000s to offer Family Education & Support services, now serving eleven Montana counties.

In 2019, STEP broadened its mission by developing recovery residences, recognizing the strong connection between parental substance use and developmental disabilities in children. STEP now operates six sober living homes in Billings, including one for pregnant and postpartum women and children.

In 2021, STEP partnered with DPHHS and the Fletcher Group to help establish Recovery Access Montana, the state's affiliate of the National Alliance for Recovery Residences. STEP's homes became the first in Montana to receive certification in 2023, with RAM now recognized by DPHHS as one of two official certifying organizations.

For more information about STEP, please click

1970s. They believed children belonged with their families and communities, not isolated in institutions.

the button below or call [406.248.2055](tel:406.248.2055).

[Visit their Website](#)

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At RiverStone Health, you are at the center of everything we do with a focus on improving life, health and safety of our community. Serving the Yellowstone County community and south-central Montana for 50 years, we are an essential provider of personal and public health services. Health, Education, Leadership and Protection – HELP is what we do.

We offer medical, dental and behavioral health; home health and hospice; public health services like immunizations, WIC, health promotion and restaurant inspections; and educate the next generation of health professionals. Our expertise spans all ages and stages of life.

If you would like to be a future partner spotlight, or learn more about RiverStone Health's work in the community please reach out to our Communications team at [Communications@RiverStoneHealth.org](mailto:Communications@RiverStoneHealth.org) or 406.247.3387.



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