



Media Information

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Medicaid unwinding leads to staff, budget cuts at RiverStone Health

Billings, MT – Over the past several months, RiverStone Health has been taking steps to reduce its budget after losing more than \$3 million in Medicaid revenue this fiscal year, ending June 30.

This week, RiverStone Health notified 29 employees that they will be part of a reduction in force effective mid-June. In total, RiverStone Health has cut almost 9% of its workforce across the organization, including employees already impacted by prior program closures. Several senior leadership positions and managerial roles were also consolidated or eliminated because of these challenges.

“Everyone impacted by these reductions plays a vital role in protecting life, health and safety. The elimination of these positions does not diminish the incredible difference they’ve made in serving our community,” said Jon Forte, RiverStone Health president and CEO.

Like other hospitals and healthcare organizations, RiverStone Health is not immune to the impacts of inflation. Rising costs, lower-than-expected patient volumes for primary care services and stagnant reimbursement rates have been exacerbated by the Medicaid redetermination process that began in April 2023.

Despite efforts to keep all eligible Montanans enrolled in Medicaid, RiverStone Health has seen a drastic decline in the number of enrolled Medicaid patients, even though most patients still qualify for Medicaid. As a Federally Qualified Health Center, RiverStone Health provides medical, dental and behavioral healthcare for everyone, regardless of their ability to pay. However, as more Montanans lose healthcare coverage because of inefficiencies in the Medicaid unwinding process, the burden of this uncompensated care impacts the livelihood of both our patients and our staff.

“Unfortunately, it is impossible to further reduce expenses without impacting our dedicated team members, as other health organizations in our state and nation are now forced to do,” said Forte.

“Montana’s Medicaid reenrollment process has created hardships for over 134,000 Montanans. Now it is directly impacting our dedicated healthcare professionals who cared for them with compassion.”

Affected employees received a support package that included a 30-day notice, access to employee assistance and support services. Eligible employees will also be able to apply for limited internal vacancies as they are available.

“Despite these challenges, our commitment to our community is unwavering,” Forte said. “RiverStone Health will continue to meet the public health needs of Yellowstone County and continue providing high-quality care and support to every individual who walks through our doors, regardless of our financial constraints or theirs.”

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