

CONFLUENCE 2024

# Awards Banquet

Montana Environmental Health Association  
Montana Public Health Association

*A celebration of members,  
by the members,  
for the members.*



# Program

5:00

Host bar opens.  
*Wine, beer, and well drinks  
available until host tab limit is met.*

5:30

Remarks from APHA and  
NEHA Presidents.

5:30

Dinner buffet begins.

6:00 – 7:30

Awards

## WELCOME FROM YOUR MPHA & MEHA PRESIDENTS

*All Montanans are thriving and living in healthier communities because of an innovative, connected, and trusted environmental and public health workforce.*



*A.C. Rothenbuecher, MPH  
President, Montana Public Health  
Association*



*Mercedes Overlie, RS  
President, Montana Environmental  
Health Association*

## **Welcome!**

As the President of the Montana Public Health Association, I want to extend my sincerest welcome to the 2024 Confluence Public Health Alliance Conference. I would like to take a moment to celebrate! Over the past year, MPHA has accomplished a lot - updated our Board by-laws, initiated the Public Health Nurses Mentorship Program, participated in the APHA conference, voted on important public health policies as a member of the APHA Governing Council, and advocated on key public health issues in our state. I want to thank our Board members, our dedicated staff, Lisa and Kayla, and you, our Montana public health workforce.

We are excited about what is to come. If you are a MPHA member - thank you! If you are not a member - we'd love to chat with you about the value of membership. This is a great time to get involved. We have a few Board vacancies and openings on joint committees. If you are interested in learning more, please connect with Board members or staff.

Lastly, thank you for all that you do in Montana to serve our communities. I hope that you have time to connect with new and old friends and colleagues and fill your cup!

A.C. Rothenbuecher

---

## **Welcome to the MEHA & MPHA Awards Banquet!**

I am pleased to extend a warm welcome to all members, partners, and friends joining our community. At the Montana Environmental Health Association (MEHA), we're dedicated to fostering collaboration, innovation, and growth in the environmental health field.

Whether you're a seasoned professional or just starting your journey in environmental health, I encourage you to actively engage with our community, share your insights, and seize the countless opportunities for learning, networking, and collaboration.

Through MEHA's sanitarian mentorship program and collective expertise, we aim to empower each other and drive positive change by maintaining and improving the environmental health specialist profession.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for choosing to be a part of MEHA. Your involvement and contributions are what make our public health community truly special.

Warm regards,  
Mercedes Overlie



## Early Impact Award

This award honors a public health worker who has made an impact in the first 2-5 years of employment in public health. The award was created in 1996 to honor the life of Marlene Stellmon, a public health nurse and nurse consultant who was known for supporting new public health workers during her employment at the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

### 2024 Awardee - **KILANI KLETTE**

Nominated by James Wardensky

In recognition of your professionalism, passion, and dedication as a champion for health in your community. We acknowledge your integrity, work ethic, and ongoing commitment to positively impacting public health in Flathead County.

---



## Vernon E. Sloulin Rookie of the Year

This award honors a MEHA member who is new to the field of environmental health and is currently a registered Sanitarian.

Vernon E. Sloulin served as Chief of the Food and Consumer Safety Bureau of the Department of Montana Health and Human Services for much of his career. Together with William G. Walter, planning and conduct of MEHA educational conferences was carried out by Vern. During his 33 years involvement in Environmental Health, Vern served on several committees within the National Environmental Health Association and also served as Regional Vice-President. Vern received the prestigious Mangold Award in 1982, NEHA's highest honor that recognizes the outstanding contributions that environmental health professionals make to public health and safety.

### 2024 Awardee - **DAMION LYNN**

Nominated by Jera Samuelson and Elsa Lunde

Recognizing your passion, drive and dedication to the Gallatin City-County Health Department and the Gallatin County community. We honor your commitment to public health and improving the field of environmental health for all.

---



## Distinguished Service Award

This is MPHA's highest honor, originating from the work of Mary E. Soules, MD, who was Director of the Disease Control Division of the state health department at the time of her unexpected death in 1972. "Dr. Mary" was a friend to all who knew and worked with her and represented the essence of public health. It is fitting that this award be given annually to one person who has exemplified public health principles and practices throughout his or her career in Montana.

### 2024 Awardee - **SUE HANSEN**

Nominated by Stefanie Tassaró and Lilia Guillen-Sanchez

In recognition of nearly 35 years of service, and the path you paved for the future of public health in Beaverhead County and beyond. Your leadership and mentorship have had a profound and lasting effect on the public health workforce, and the value of your guidance is incalculable. We honor your compassion, dedication and unwavering commitment to improving the public health profession and the health of our communities.

---



## Distinguished Service Award

This award honors an individual or organization outside of MEHA who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of environmental health in Montana.

### 2024 Awardee - **JESSE GREEN**

Nominated by Danielle Peirce

Recognizing 19 exceptional years of leadership and commitment to Flathead County and your innovation of environmental health systems and practices, mentorship and training, and passionate education of peers and the public. We honor your dedication to public health and the knowledge and guidance you impart to those around you.



## Exemplary Service Award

This award honors an individual's exemplary performance in public health. These awards are given (one per region) to those who provide support/expertise above and beyond what is customary.

Prominent examples in MPHA history have included the work of Jerry Cormier and Elaine Fordyce. Jerry served as an environmental health specialist in Eastern Montana and was considered the DPHHS's "one-man eastern office". He was committed to public safety in the state's food and pool programs. Elaine Fordyce was a public health nurse who dedicated her life to mentoring others and collaborating with the community in her team approach to communicable disease control. The exemplary work of people like Jerry Cormier and Elaine Fordyce has strengthened our public health system.

### 2024 Awardee - Region 3 : **AMANDA ZIMMERMAN**

Nominated by Amy Queen

In recognition of your professionalism, passion, and organization to help communities achieve public health goals. We honor your commitment to public health and your impactful, insightful leadership.

---



## Doris Morgan Excellence Award

This award honors a MEHA member for making a notable and important contribution to the field of environmental health through excellence of leadership and motivational skills.

### 2024 Awardee - **SHAWN ROWLAND**

Nominated by Beth Norberg, Shannon Therriault, and Brittney Krahn

Recognizing the knowledge and conviction you share with your colleagues and community, your admirable leadership and motivational skills, and your longstanding dedication to environmental health. We honor your commitment to public health protection and upholding of what it means to be a sanitarian.

---



## Exemplary Service Award

This award honors an individual's exemplary performance in public health. These awards are given (one per region) to those who provide support/expertise above and beyond what is customary.

Prominent examples in MPHA history have included the work of Jerry Cormier and Elaine Fordyce. Jerry served as an environmental health specialist in Eastern Montana and was considered the DPHHS's "one-man eastern office". He was committed to public safety in the state's food and pool programs. Elaine Fordyce was a public health nurse who dedicated her life to mentoring others and collaborating with the community in her team approach to communicable disease control. The exemplary work of people like Jerry Cormier and Elaine Fordyce has strengthened our public health system.

### 2024 Awardee - Region 5 : **SHELLEY STOUT**

Nominated by James Wardensky and Jesse Green

In recognition of 24 years of service and the integral role you play at every professional level in environmental health. Your hard work is an inspiration for those around you to do the same. We honor your wisdom, guidance, and dedication to Environmental Health and the Flathead County community.

---



## Certificate of Recognition

This award honors any individual or organization deserving of recognition for a special achievement in environmental health or special effort that promotes or supports the work of environmental health.

### 2024 Awardee - **KELLY ARNOLD**

Nominated by John Palacio

In recognition of your dedication, commitment, and reliability. We honor your contributions to Ravalli County Environmental Health and the health of your community.

### 2024 Awardee - **JENNI FRASE**

Nominated by John Palacio

In recognition of your dedication and determination to the Ravalli County Environmental Health Department and the Ravalli County Community. We honor your commitment to building relationships and connections with the public and the hard work and service you provide to your community.

---



## Certificate of Recognition

This award honors any individual or organization deserving of recognition for a special achievement in environmental health or special effort that promotes or supports the work of environmental health.

### 2024 Awardee - **KATHI HOOPER**

Nominated by Robin Blumberg

In recognition of your leadership, generosity, and commitment to supporting your staff and the Lincoln County community. We honor your professionalism and dedication in fostering future generations of public health professionals.

### 2024 Awardee - **JERA SAMUELSON**

Nominated by Jeremy Jenks, Anna Snyder, and Wendy Wilson

In recognition of your outstanding knowledge and willingness to lend a hand while going above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the health of your community. We honor your hard work, resilience, and passion.



## Career Achievement Award

This award honors an individual with a strong commitment to public health over the course of 25 years or more.

### 2024 Awardee - **WENDEE JACOBS**

Nominated by James Wardensky

Recognizing 26 exceptional years of leadership and dedicated service to Flathead County. We honor your graceful and confident leadership, your pioneering work, and your mastery of environmental health. Your approach to environmental health sets a standard of excellence for all.







## Donald E. Pizzini Outstanding Achievement

This award honors a Montana Sanitarian who has contributed for several years to the field of environmental health.

In 1968, Donald E. Pizzini went to work for the Cascade City-County Health Department where he was responsible for creating the Cascade County Pesticide Program, Solid Waste District, and the Air Pollution Control Program. In 1973, Don was appointed as the first non-physician Health Officer in Montana and served in that capacity until 1989. During this same time, he was also Administrator of the Cascade County Nursing Home. In 1989, he was appointed by Governor Stan Stephens as the first non-physician Director for the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences (DHES). After he left the State, DHES was broken up into DEQ and DPHHS. In 1994, he worked as EPA Chief of the Superfund Program where he was instrumental in the creation of the Old Works Golf Course as a remediation method for Anaconda's ASARCO Old Works Smelter project.

### 2024 Awardee - **CHARLIE SHANE**

Nominated by Cassidy Leno

In recognition of your leadership, generosity, and your positive demeanor. We honor your willingness to answer questions, share knowledge, and help others solve problems. You make the workplace a better and more knowledgeable place.

---



## Exemplary Service Award

This award honors an individual's exemplary performance in public health. These awards are given (one per region) to those who provide support/expertise above and beyond what is customary.

### 2024 Awardees - Region 4 : **GALLATIN CITY-COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF** and **MONTANA DPHHS STAFF**

Nominated by Lori Christenson

In recognition of the instrumental cross-jurisdictional collaboration between the Gallatin City-County Health Department and DPHHS in completing a detailed and in-depth epidemiological study, public communications, and the sharing of services and resources. We honor your timely and collaborative efforts in investigating foodborne illness outbreaks.



## President's Award

This award, chosen by the MPHA Executive Board, honors a group of individuals, an organization, or agency whose ongoing work in policy, research, a program, or a project has a significant statewide impact in public health. The MPHA President's Award was established as a way for public health leadership to show appreciation for ongoing work performed in support of high priority public health issues in Montana.

### 2024 Awardee - **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ALLIANCE OF MONTANA**

In recognition of The Behavioral Health Alliance of Montana's statewide impact in strengthening behavioral health, specifically for BHAM's expert work in advocating for prevention and serving as a trusted voice for community-based services and solutions.

---



### William G. Walter Outstanding Sanitarian

This award honors a MEHA member who has shown outstanding job performance in the past year.

### 2024 Awardee - **JERA SAMUELSON**

Nominated by Jill Brunt, Chris Burns, Kara Deeter, Heather Demorest, Nick Haskell, Shannon Holder, Shane Lewis, Damion Lynn, Frankie Nelson, Lauren Parri, Anna Snyder, Mary Valenzuela, and Wendy Wilson

In recognition of your leadership, professionalism, and dedication to the Gallatin County community. Your peers and colleagues recognize that you have gone above and beyond your duty, navigating challenging and stressful situations with grace and professionalism. Your positive attitude is a light to those around you. We honor your extraordinary contributions and dedication to public health. You are an environmental health hero.

## Boards of Directors & Staff



- **AC Rothenbuecher**, *President & Affiliate Representative to APHA Council*
- **Emily Colomeda**, *Past-President*
- **Kristi Aklestad**, *President-Elect*
- **Desiree Restad**, *Secretary*
- **Shawn Hinz**, *Treasurer & Confluence Representative*
- **Niki Graham**, *Tribal Liaison VP*
- **Lynn Miller**, *VP Region 1*
- **Holly Jordt**, *VP Region 5*
- **Melissa Henderson**, *VP Region 3 & Confluence Representative*
- **Kristen Bonner**, *Public Health Nurse Section Chair*
- **Terry Ray**, *DPHHS Rep*
- Vacant, *VP Region 4*
- Vacant, *VP Region 2*

- **Mercedes Overlie**, *President*
- **Dustin Schreiner**, *Past-President*
- **Damion Lynn**, *President-Elect*
- **Anna Baxter**, *Vice President*
- **Sarah Robbin**, *Treasurer & Confluence Representative*
- **Kira Flagstead**, *Secretary*
- **Dita Bras**, *Director*
- **Valerie Stacey**, *Director & Confluence Representative*
- Vacant, *Alt. Treasurer*



- **Shawn Hinz**, *President (MPHA)*
- **Sarah Robbin**, *Vice President (MEHA)*
- **Drenda Niemann**, *Treasurer (AMPHO)*
- **Damian Chase-Begay**, *(MPHA)*
- **Valerie Stacey**, *(MEHA)*
- **Jenn McCully**, *(AMPHO)*
- **Melissa Henderson**, *(MPHA)*
- **Jenna Fisher**, *(MEHA)*
- **Emilie Sayler**, *(AMPHO)*

- **Melissa Moyer**, *Chair*
- **Jenn McCully**, *Past-Chair & Confluence Representative until May 1*
- **Stefanie Harrington**, *Vice Chair*
- **Laurel Desnick**, *Treasurer*
- **Lori Christenson**, *Large LHD Rep*
- **Drenda Niemann**, *Large LHD Rep & Confluence Representative*
- **Amy Shaw**, *Small LHD Rep*
- **Pam Hanna**, *Small LHD Rep*
- **Brittney Petersen**, *Medium LHD Rep*
- Vacant, *Tribal HD Rep*
- Vacant, *Tribal HD Rep*

**Staff:** *Lisa Dworak & Kayla Chipongian*

Thank You



[www.confluencepha.org](http://www.confluencepha.org)