

## Story Submission Guidelines

HMHB publishes materials to promote storytelling as a healing modality, normalize experiences that mothers and other parents/caregivers may have in pregnancy and parenting, raise awareness of issues pertaining to maternal-child health and other pregnancy and parenting issues, and generate support for HMHB as an organization.

HMHB publications are consistent with HMHB's mission to improve the health, safety, and well-being of Montana families by supporting mothers and babies, age zero to three. In general, HMHB seeks to build community and empower families and, accordingly, strives to promote informative, positive, compassionate and harm-reducing messaging. HMHB also strives to communicate in ways that acknowledge families' varying backgrounds, income levels, and experiences, as well as the professionals who assist families.

HMHB asks that you read and then use these guidelines when contributing your story to HMHB.

1. Contributions should be your lived experience. Please do not submit the story or photo of friends or family members.
2. Written contributions should be in the first-person point of view (pronouns of I, me, etc.).
3. Stories should be 475 words or fewer, unless you have already talked with HMHB about submitting a longer story.
4. The story or photo should be one you own, meaning that no one else has a copyright or other claim of ownership through prior publication or otherwise.
5. Stories should have a narrative approach, not a persuasive tone. We are working to build a community, not convince families of something being good or bad.
6. Contributions should not name specific providers, organizations, or individuals in a negative light. There are potential liability concerns about "calling out" specific people or entities. HMHB strives to maintain positive relationships with as many stakeholders as possible. Depending on your story, it may make sense to:
  - a. Refer to systemic issues like "medical billing" or "overwhelmed hospitals";
  - b. Center language on yourself, such as "I was prescribed Xanax" or "I was confused"; or
  - c. Use generic terms like "the doctor" or "my insurer" rather than specific names.
7. Profanity is not necessarily prohibited but depending on the funder and/or audience for where your contribution would appear, we may edit profanity to an abbreviation, blur any profanity in pictures, and/or ask you to alter your submission. You may wish to consider alternatives.
8. Contributions should not advertise for, depict, or refer to brand names or logos of for-profit items or services. If a logo or name brand appears in a photo, HMHB has full discretion whether to publish with a cropped or blurred logo or brand name, or not to publish at all.
9. Contributions should not have any personally identifiable information in them (e.g., license plates, address numbers, dates of birth).
10. Contributions should demonstrate safe child care practices such as adequate supervision and age-appropriate supplies and equipment.
11. Release forms must accompany all contributions.
  - a. HMHB will not use a contribution without the appropriate releases, either for an individual or an organization (e.g., if you work for a public health agency and are submitting a story about your work with families).

- b. You must also submit a signed release for each person whose face appears in a photo or video.
  - c. If photos or videos are in a medical facility, they must only show the people who have signed a release form and may not show any other people (including facility employees like doctors and nurses), health data, or location names.
12. Contributions should be free of hate speech, divisive, or other offensive speech.