



Advocacy | Education | Leadership | Collegiality | Member Perks

2026 MMA Membership

The Heart of Montana Medicine

Physicians, as the heart of medicine, can depend on the MMA to keep the beat strong on the need to grow our workforce, support collegiality, and care for our health professional workforce. MMA is focused on your well-being and will open new access to confidential care for physicians, thanks to our legislative success. Join the MMA and watch for the new SafeHaven opportunity in 2026, an avenue for confidential care when needed to keep you and your team beating strong.

2026 MMA Membership: [Renew or Join Here](#)

MMA Rounds and Bulletin publications are a member benefit, renew or join today to continue receiving MMA publications.

Fluticasone Coverage

Background: Since Flovent (fluticasone) stopped being manufactured in January 2024, children with asthma treated with inhaled corticosteroids have had difficulty filling medications in a timely manner. Asmanex (mometasone, preferred for many insurers) has been intermittently in shortage due to a manufacturer capacity issue for more than a year. Patients have faced issues overriding formulary preferences to access Fluticasone ("authorized generic") as an alternative. Another alternative, Qvar (beclomethasone), is made as a breath-actuated inhaler which is not easily operable by young children.

MTAAP has worked with Medicaid and Blue Cross of Montana to ask to implement changes to provide more seamless access. These are now in effect and are summarized below.

BCBS's solution is:

- Montana Blue Cross has created a temporary allowance for Fluticasone HFA 44mcg and Fluticasone HFA 110mcg while Asmanex HFA products are unavailable. This is a temporary action to help prevent disruption during drug shortages and may be subject to change.
- Coverage will be handled through an override at pharmacy point-of-sale. If the pharmacy is unable to obtain the preferred alternative, Asmanex HFA, and attempts to process a claim for Fluticasone HFA 44mcg or Fluticasone HFA 110mcg they will receive a point-of-sale message with an override code allowing the member to receive the non-covered drug (Fluticasone HFA 44 mcg or Fluticasone HFA 110 mcg). The code will be entered by the pharmacy, no review through Coverage Exception is required.
- For prescribers, **it would be prudent to write 2 prescriptions for time-sensitive patients needing an inhaled corticosteroid** -- one for Asmanex (50/100), and one for the equivalent strength of Fluticasone (44/110) if Asmanex is unavailable. That way pharmacists do not have to fax you for permission to convert the prescription to Fluticasone.

Medicaid's solution is:

- Montana Medicaid prefers Asmanex HFA (mometasone) as an inhaled corticosteroid for children with asthma.
- Because Asmanex has been intermittently in shortage, MTAAP has asked Medicaid to temporarily override their preferred drug list to allow prescription of fluticasone HFA for children 11 and younger.
- Medicaid recommends we use Fluticasone ONLY for children for whom other alternate preferred drugs are not appropriate.
- Medicaid also suggests that **both Asmanex and Fluticasone prescriptions could be kept on file at the pharmacy**, so Asmanex could be used if available.
- Medicaid **does** allow the use of fluticasone 44 mcg in children 5 years old and younger as a preferred corticosteroid.

Medicaid's formulary, for reference:

CORTICOSTEROIDS INHALED

Preferred Agents	Non-Preferred	Non-Preferred Cont.	Limitations
Alvesco	<i>Airspra</i>	<i>fluticasone Diskus (generic Flovent)</i>	Non-preferred combination products require trial of combination of preferred products with all requested MOAs
Arnuity Ellipta	<i>Flovent Diskus</i>	<i>fluticasone HFA 44mcg (>=6y.o.)</i>	
Asmanex HFA		<i>fluticasone HFA 110 and 220mcg Pulmicort Respules</i>	
Asmanex Twisthaler			
budesonide Respules			
fluticasone HFA 44mcg (<=5y.o.)			
Pulmicort Flexhaler			
Qvar Redihaler			

Montana's Rural Health Windfall

MTFP (1/13) How far could the \$1 billion, five-year investment go toward filling the hole left by Medicaid cuts? In late December, state and federal officials celebrated the announcement of a health care funding windfall. The administration of President Donald Trump had said it would hand Montana roughly \$233 million for the first year of the Rural Health Transformation Program, a five-year, nationwide investment surge in rural health care services and infrastructure. That award amount — for a state with

just over a million people — was more than the awards for most other states. [Read more](#)

Montana State Auditor Reports up to \$50M in Suspected Health Care Fraud Targeting Tribal Members

KTVH (1/16) HELENA — Montana State Auditor James Brown says his office has identified what could be up to \$50 million in attempted health care fraud, in what he calls a scheme targeting vulnerable people in the state's tribal communities. [Read more](#)

Expert Warns \$50B Rural Health Fund May Fall Short

U.SNews (1/14) The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recently rolled out the first year's worth of federal funding aimed at bolstering rural healthcare, after Congress approved steep Medicaid cuts last year that are expected to hit rural hospitals and communities especially hard. The Rural Health Transformation Program is a \$50 billion initiative meant to "strengthen and modernize health care in rural communities across the country," according to the Trump administration. Critics, however, have long warned that the funding is unlikely to be enough to offset the impact of the federal cuts. [Read more](#)

State Secures buy/sell Agreement for Laurel Behavioral Health Facility Location

Daily Montanan (1/23) The Montana Board of Investments has executed a buy/sell agreement for a 114-acre property west of Laurel as the proposed location of a new behavioral health facility.

In a letter to the Laurel City Council, BOI Executive Director Dan Villa wrote that with the agreement in place, the Board will begin the "formal process of requesting annexation and assignment of zoning" from the city.

The property is located west of the city along Old U.S. 10 between 8th Avenue and Golf Course Road. The state Department of Health and Humans announced over Thanksgiving that it had selected the city as the location for the new health center, despite not having an exact location figured out.

During the 2025 legislative session, a long-range planning bill set aside \$26.5 million for the 32-bed forensic mental health facility, though recent estimates indicate it will cost significantly more than that. [Read more](#)

Court Voids Rule Letting Optometrists do Eyelid Surgery

AMA (1/15) The West Virginia Board of Optometry went beyond its rulemaking authority when it sought to expand optometrists' scope of practice to include some eyelid surgeries, according to a circuit court ruling in the Mountaineer State. Out of concern for patient safety, the West Virginia State Medical Association and the West Virginia Academy of Eye Physicians & Surgeons Inc. sued the state optometry board in Kanawha County Circuit Court. The lawsuit asked the court to preliminarily enjoin optometrists from performing these surgeries and to ultimately find that Rule 14-14-1 is void. The optometry board promulgated the rule in 2023, and it was approved by the state legislature in 2024. As a result of the court's ruling, the board

issued a formal statement Nov. 20, 2025, declaring that the rule is no longer in effect. [Read more](#)

Congress Clinches Bipartisan Health Deal

Politico (1/20) Congressional leaders reached a bipartisan, bicameral health care deal early Tuesday morning they hope lawmakers will pass later this week as part of a four-bill government spending package. Alongside funding for the departments of Defense, Transportation, Labor, Health and Human Services and Homeland Security through Sept. 30, senior appropriators are proposing a crackdown on drug intermediates known as pharmacy benefit managers, or PBMs. [Read more](#)

American Red Cross Declares Emergency Blood Shortage

ABC News (1/20, Kekatos) reports, "The American Red Cross declared a severe emergency blood shortage on Monday" and has called on people to donate. "The humanitarian organization, which says it's the largest supplier of blood products for hospitals and for patient need in the U.S., said the demand from hospitals has outpaced the available supply of blood," ABC News reports. "Dr. Courtney Lawrence, divisional chief medical officer at American Red Cross, told ABC News that almost one-third of the organization's blood stores across the country have been depleted due to hospital need." [Read more](#)

Trump Administration Reverses Itself, Restores \$2 Billion in Mental Health, Substance Abuse Grants

MTFP (1/15) Less than 24 hours after terminating about \$2 billion in substance abuse and mental health grants nationwide, the Trump administration reversed itself and restored the funding.

In Montana, state public health officials and advocacy groups told Montana Free Press Wednesday that local suicide prevention, addiction recovery and other mental health programs had lost millions of dollars in federal funding overnight. Many expressed shock and confusion after receiving a letter from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, also known as SAMHSA, which said grant money that had already been distributed would be clawed back. [Read more](#)

Fall/Winter Bulletin Now Available

Our Fall/Winter Bulletin, along with previous issues of MMA Rounds is now available on our website under the "news" tab. Catch up on updates, advocacy highlights, and important news impacting Montana physicians, all in one convenient place. Visit our website to read the latest issue and explore past editions at your convenience.

<https://www.mmaoffice.org/bulletin-and-rounds/>

B U L L E T I N



Your Care is at Our Core

Physicians are Patients' Strongest Allies in Health: Every Step of the Way

Montana Medical Association has joined other state medical associations to launch a campaign to elevate physician's reputations, fight legislative battles, and amplify the patient-physician relationship.

YOUR CARE IS AT OUR CORE
Montana's Physicians



In recent years physicians have faced reputational challenges brought on by broader frustrations with the healthcare system. Recognizing the need to better understand and address these challenges, the American Medical Association's Advocacy Resource Center conducted extensive opinion research and found that Americans want to see more of their physicians. 89% of national voters agree that the doctor-patient relationship is central to health care – but structural factors have habituated them to the idea that physicians are hard to schedule and that they are forced to spend too little time with them. As a result, Your Care is at Our Core was developed directly from these research findings and was created to elevate the message of what drives physicians: trust, empathy, compassion, and time caring and fighting for their patients. Since its launch in January 2024, more than half of state medical associations have chosen to participate in Your Care is at Our Core, including us. Learn more: <https://www.mmaoffice.org/your-care-is-at-our-core/>
Share your story: [Your Care is at our Core: Gathering Physician Stories](#)

*If you are interested in sharing a testimonial to be posted on our social media platforms, please contact **Lexie Gleasman** lexie@mmaoffice.org*

MEMBERSHIPS DUES & RENEWALS

2026 Membership: Renew Your MMA Membership

As the recognized voice of the medical profession in Montana for more than 147 years, the Montana Medical Association and local medical societies have represented Montana's physicians with a keen understanding of unique challenges facing our medical professionals. The ever-changing health care landscape is a reality and the Montana Medical Association is prepared to keep pace with those changing realities.

What we do together, no one physician can do alone. Your membership makes a difference in strengthening the physician's voice, shaping the changing health care landscape, and advancing ambitious clinical and educational initiatives that empowers physicians and positively impacts patient care and the practice of medicine in Montana.

Have an impact through your support of the MMA where the physician voice is unified, patient centered policies are amplified, and capacity can grow to advance medical science. You can easily join or renew now below, or call (406) 443-4000.

[BUY YOUR MMA MEMBERSHIP](#)

Managing a complex mental health case? Let's talk.

Get **free psychiatric consults** for Montana clinicians treating pregnant/postpartum patients or youth 0-21.

Call **844-406-8725** for a consult.



ADVOCACY REMINDERS

You can view our VoterVoice at any time to see what issues we are promoting at this [link](#).

If you wish to testify or help with advocacy efforts, please contact Jean Branscum at jean@mmaoffice.org, and we can help coordinate.

Additionally, check out our Legislative Advocacy Training video taught by SetPoint Media founder Tara Jensen, which can be viewed [here](#) with your MMA login.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 5, 2026	Cannabis Use Disorder	Free Webinar Series with MPCA
February 19, 2026	Overdose Safety Planning	Free Webinar Series with MPCA
February 6-7, 2026	HELP Program Session 4	Fairmont Hot Springs
March 27-28, 2026	MMA Interim BOT Meeting	Virtual

If you would like your event listed, please email the name, date, and a way to find more information to mma@mmaofice.org.

Gohagan & Company Travel Offers



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Comprehensive DEA-Compliant CME/CE Course



IS YOUR DEA CERTIFICATE UP FOR RENEWAL?

Complete Mandatory Renewal Requirements in 1 Day!

Don't forget that Montana Medical Association members can receive a discount on training requirements under the MATE ACT regulations. Members can register for on-demand online courses or live webinars [here](#). Be sure to use discount codes to save \$100 at checkout for either on-demand online courses (code: MMAWEB100) or live online courses (code: MMA100).

30% Member Discount on Online Training!

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This program is being provided to you to distribute to your patients to help lower their prescription drug costs. Simply distribute the FREE Prescription Drug Card below and your patients can save up to 75% (discounts average roughly 30%) at more than 68,000 national and regional pharmacies. This card can be used as a primary plan and/or it can be used on prescriptions not covered by other plans. This program also includes other value-added programs, which will be listed on the card. This card is pre-activated and can be used immediately.

Follow Us On Social Media!

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