



Advocacy | Education | Leadership | Collegiality | Member Perks



Thank you for your continued support and MMA Membership.
The MMA Executive office will be closed December 25th and 26th.

2026 MMA Membership

Ways to Join!

MMA Website: <https://www.mmaoffice.org/membership/>

QuickPay Page: <https://montana-medical-association.constantcontactsites.com/>

Call MMA Executive Office: 406/443-4000

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

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/>

Laurel Selected for New Behavioral Health Facility

DPHHS (Ebelt 11/28) HELENA, Mont. – The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) announced today the selection of Laurel, Mont., as the location of its new behavioral health facility, after the director of the Office of Budget and Program Planning (OBPP) approved a plan from DPHHS and the Board of Investments (BOI).

“We are grateful to the City of Laurel and its leaders for their interest in partnering with the state on a new behavioral health facility,” DPHHS Director Charlie Brereton said. “Laurel provides access to a critical health care workforce and infrastructure necessary to ensure the facility’s success. Furthermore, Laurel’s geographic location is ideally situated for improving transportation logistics for patients and their families, staff, and law enforcement across central and eastern Montana.”

In 2025, Montana legislators passed House Bill 5, which transfers \$26.5 million to BOI to build a behavioral health facility. The project represents a focused effort to expand access to high-quality mental health services, improve patient outcomes, and strengthen eastern Montana’s public health infrastructure.

The [letter to OBPP selecting Laurel as the facility location](#) can be viewed at hb5.mt.gov.

“Big, Beautiful Bill” changes that will reshape care in 2026

AMA (12/10) Fiscal incentives to expand Medicaid will end. Increased costs for Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace enrollees. Medical students will have fewer

options to pay student loans. Physicians can expect to see these significant policy changes and others under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 (OBBBA) starting in January 2026.

While much of the massive budget bill will take many years to come into effect, some changes will start next year. [Here's what you need to know.](#)

AMA Issues Updated Study Results on Competition in Health Insurance

AMA (12/10) The 24th edition of the American Medical Association's "Competition in health insurance: A comprehensive study of U.S. markets" has been released. This study presents new data on the degree of competition in health insurance markets across the country. In Montana, the study shows BCBS and Cigna has holding the largest market shares.

Read more: [AMA report: Health insurance giants tighten grip on U.S. markets | American Medical Association](#)

HHS cuts millions in grants to the American Academy of Pediatrics

MSN (12/17) The Department of Health and Human Services has terminated seven grants totaling millions of dollars to the American Academy of Pediatrics, escalating its confrontation with the group, which is suing Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. over vaccine policy.

The grants supported initiatives aimed at reducing sudden infant deaths, improving teen and young adult health, preventing birth defects, such as fetal alcohol syndrome, and identifying autism early, according to an academy spokesperson.

Read more: [HHS cuts millions in grants to the American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

Advisory committee votes to end recommendation that all newborns get hepatitis B vaccine

The [AP](#) (12/5, Stobbe) reported, "A federal vaccine advisory committee voted on Friday to end the longstanding recommendation that all U.S. babies get the hepatitis B vaccine on the day they're born." The "advisory committee decided to recommend the birth dose only for babies whose mothers test positive, and in cases where the mom wasn't tested. For other babies, it will be up to the parents and their doctors to decide if a birth dose is appropriate."

The [New York Times](#) (12/5, A1, Mandavilli) reported that "the committee did not change the recommendation that newborns of mothers known to be infected or whose status is unknown be immunized. The shift is not expected to affect insurance coverage of the shots."

[The Hill](#) (12/5, Venkat) reported that in a statement, AMA trustee Sandra Adamson Fryhofer, MD, said, "The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice's (ACIP) vote to weaken the birth-dose recommendation for the Hepatitis B vaccine is reckless and undermines decades of public confidence in a proven, lifesaving vaccine." She added, "Today's action is not based on scientific evidence, disregards data supporting the effectiveness of the Hepatitis B vaccine, and creates confusion for parents about how best to protect their newborns."

Medicare Telehealth Update

AMA (12/5) In response to AMA advocacy, CMS issued important new guidance clarifying that physicians who have a practice location other than their home can continue to use that location as their Medicare enrollment address even if they provide some telehealth services from their home. The AMA had asked CMS to clarify the policy after the 2026 final rule stated only that the previous flexibility allowing physicians providing telehealth services from their homes to use their currently enrolled practice location instead of listing their home address in the Medicare enrollment database was not being extended. New FAQs make it clear that the only physicians who need to report their home address to Medicare are those whose practice involves provision of telehealth services from their home and who do not have another practice location.

[Read More](#)

Montana Board Appointments & Vacancies

- Public member on Board of Medical Examiners [More Information Here](#)
- Physician on Rare Disease Advisory Council [More Information Here](#)
- Business Representative on State Workforce Investment Board [More Information Here](#)

Opportunity to Assist with Ongoing Professional Practice Evaluation

The Department of Public Health and Human Services has an opening for OPPE (Ongoing Professional Practice Evaluation). This is for medical review, not psychiatric, so internists and primary care physicians seeking part-time work are encouraged to consider this opportunity. The time commitment is 4-10 hours/month and the set consulting fee rate is \$150/hr.

Interested candidates can contact Dr. Harrington, State Medical Officer for additional information at Douglas.Harrington@mt.gov or by phone at 406-266-1788.

Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program: How You Can Make a Difference

The Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program (MTUPP) works to reduce the use of commercial tobacco products and eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke for all Montanans.

One of MTUPP's key resources is **[Quit Now Montana](#)**, which provides free, customized quit plans for all Montanans who want to quit commercial tobacco or nicotine. Services include counseling (by phone, chat, or text), educational materials, nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and cessation medications. You can support these efforts by ensuring your clinic or organization screens for tobacco use, assesses patients' readiness to quit, and refers them to Quit Now Montana.

MTUPP also promotes health through the **[Montana Clean Indoor Air Act \(CIAA\)](#)**, which prioritizes the right to breathe smoke-free air. The CIAA is a state law that protects the public and workers from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke in indoor public places, including places of work. You can help reinforce smoke-free environments by keeping your facility tobacco and nicotine-free, providing staff training, **[reporting CIAA violations](#)**, supporting the expansion of tobacco-free

policies, and posting a sign in a clearly visible area at all public entrances stating that smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes and marijuana, in the indoor public place is prohibited. You can order free, updated signage and find additional information at tobaccofree.mt.gov.

Together, these actions strengthen Montana's commitment to healthier communities and cleaner air for all.

Author: Carolina Ferraz Martin, Cessation Specialist, Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program. Carolina.martin@mt.gov. 406-444-5964

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.

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/>



*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

Date	Event	Location or where to find more information
January 17, 2026	HELP Class Session 3 Meeting	Webinar

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

MMA Member Perks

Gohagan & Company Travel Offers



**GOHAGAN
& COMPANY**

[Gohagan & Company – Exclusive Ocean Cruises, River Cruises, and Land Tours for Alumni, Affinity and Group Travelers](#)

ON-DEMAND VIRTUAL DEA MATE ACT Requirements Course



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!

[Click Here for more information](#)

Telehealth, Secure Messaging, and More

Backline is an award-winning secure messaging and clinical communication platform that connects all of the stakeholders in a patient's journey.

Connect with patients in virtual visits and share information between your staff, family members, caretakers, and outside providers in real-time—all in a convenient, HIPAA-compliant solution.

Keep your patients engaged and your team in sync with Backline.

**We
Endorse
Telehealth**
for Our Members

[Register Today!](#)



FREE PRESCRIPTION DISCOUNT DRUG CARD



CLICK HERE
to get your **FREE** card!

Montana Rx Card

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!

Stay up to date with Association events and initiatives by following us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Montana Medical Association | 2021 Eleventh Avenue, Suite 1 | Helena, MT 59601 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!