



Advocacy | Education | Leadership | Collegiality | Member Perks

## Join the MMA

A membership with the Montana Medical Association is an investment in your long-term success and sustainability as a physician. From protecting the practice of medicine through strong advocacy at the state level to offering confidential support resources, the MMA stands with you at every stage of your career.

Join Here: [MMA Membership](#)

## The Physicians Foundation Opens Applications for its Drivers of Health Fellowship

*Early-career physicians committed to advancing drivers of health are invited to apply*

BOSTON, January 27, 2026—Today, The Physicians Foundation announced the opening of applications for its esteemed [fellowship program](#). This leadership opportunity is for new and early-career physicians to work on health policy and care delivery innovations, particularly those related to addressing Drivers of Health.

Drivers of health, like food and housing insecurity, remain pervasive in the United States, shaping outcomes for chronic disease, recovery, and long-term wellbeing. Physicians see these impacts daily, yet many lack the time, resources and system-level support to meaningfully address patients' DOH needs within clinical practice. The Fellowship Program is designed to bridge this gap by equipping emerging physician leaders with tools to translate frontline insights into scalable solutions. The Fellow will develop and implement a project focused on supporting physicians in their ability to identify, address, and integrate interventions into care delivery—advancing practical, physician-informed approaches that improve patient outcomes while strengthening the sustainability of clinical practice.

## Program Benefits

Key benefits of the Fellowship Program include:

- Stipend and Covered Expenses: The Fellow will receive a 12-month stipend of \$24,000 as well as reimbursement for program-related travel and lodging expenses.
- Expand Leadership Skills: The fellow will learn how to be a voice for change around physician-led solutions to address patients' DOH.
- Connect With Experts: The Fellow will learn from DOH experts and leaders across sectors through mentorship opportunities.
- Shape the Future of Health Care: With the support of mentors, the fellow will develop a project that supports physicians in understanding and integrating DOH into their practices, making a tangible impact to improve health care.
- Share Perspectives: The Fellow will collaborate with the Foundation to be a part of the ongoing media and policy discourse on how to improve health care delivery through media interviews, publishing articles and social media content.

For more information about The Physicians Foundation's Fellowship Program and to **apply by March 17, 2025**, click the link below.

[Learn more](#)

### About The Physicians Foundation

The Physicians Foundation is a public charity seeking to advance the work of practicing physicians and help them facilitate the delivery of high-quality health care to patients. As the U.S. health care system continues to evolve, The Physicians Foundation is steadfast in strengthening the physician-patient relationship, supporting medical practices' sustainability and helping physicians navigate the changing health care system. The Physicians Foundation pursues its mission through research, education and innovative grant making that improves physician wellbeing, strengthens physician leadership, addresses drivers of health and lifts physician perspectives. For more information, visit [www.physiciansfoundation.org](http://www.physiciansfoundation.org)

## HHS Unveils \$100M Pilot Program to Address Homelessness, Addiction in Eight Cities

The [AP](#) (2/2, Swenson) reports HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced Monday that the agency "will devote \$100 million toward a pilot program addressing homelessness and substance abuse in eight cities, building on an executive order" signed last week. The agency "will also make faith-based organizations eligible for addiction-related grants and expand states' ability to use federal health funding for substance abuse treatment in certain situations involving children, Kennedy said." Kennedy also said the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's "new pilot program will be called STREETS, or Safety Through Recovery, Engagement and Evidence-Based Treatment and Supports." [Read more](#)

# Health Plan Management System (HPMS) Complaints Tracking Module Updates for Managing Provider Complaints

CMS has implemented an online form on [cms.gov](https://www.cms.gov) for providers that need to report a complaint about a Medicare Advantage plan. Upon submission, these complaints will be sent to the HPMS Complaints Tracking Module (CTM). The process will flow as described below:

- Providers will access the online complaint using the following steps:
  - o Go to <https://www.cms.gov>.
  - o Select “Medicare” from the top left dropdown menu.
  - o Select “Health & drug plans” from the left-hand navigation.
  - o Select “Report a provider complaint about an MA plan.”
    - The online form will capture basic information about the complainant, beneficiary, provider, and Medicare Advantage plan, a complaint summary, and optional fields for date(s) of service and claim number.
      - Given these data will be captured by an online form, MA plans will no longer receive an attachment of the original provider complaint form.
      - Provider complaints will be placed into a queue in the CTM, where CMS will review and triage prior to assigning a contract number

## Property Tax Relief for Homeowners & Landlords, Enroll by March 1

Montana residential property owners, including landlords, may be eligible for significant property tax relief through the Reduced Property Tax Rate enacted by the legislature in 2025.

Homeowners who claimed a property tax rebate in 2025 are **automatically enrolled** to receive the homestead reduced tax rate for 2026. All other principal-residence property owners must enroll to qualify.

### Who Qualifies?

- **Homesteads** (principal residences): You qualify if you live in the property for at least 7 months of the year and are current on the payment of property taxes. Eligible ownership includes properties owned by an individual, couple, or grantor revocable trust.
- **Long-term Rentals**: You qualify if:
  - The property is rented to a residential tenant for 28+ days at a time,
  - The property is rented for 7+ months of the year, and
  - You are current on the payment of property taxes.

Eligible ownership includes properties owned by an LLC, corporation, irrevocable trust, individual, couple, or grantor revocable trust.

### How to Enroll?

Property owners should visit [Homestead.mt.gov](https://www.homestead.mt.gov) to enroll online. This site provides more information on qualification criteria and includes answers to frequently asked questions. Those who need additional assistance can call the support line at 406-444-6900.

Property owners who claimed a property tax rebate in 2025 are automatically enrolled and can verify their enrollment by visiting [Homestead.mt.gov](https://www.homestead.mt.gov).

Montana residential property owners may be eligible for significant property tax relief through the Homestead Reduced Tax Rate enacted by the legislature in 2025.

# Significant Wins for Patients, Physicians in Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2026

AMA (2/6) After a short partial government shutdown, [H.R. 7148, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2026](#) was signed into law this week by President Trump. The legislation included funding for the Department of Health and Human Services—as well as a number of AMA health care policy wins, reflecting years of sustained AMA advocacy:

## Medicare telehealth extensions

- Section 6209 extends Medicare telehealth flexibilities for two years, through Dec. 31, 2027.
- Following the disruptive 43-day lapse during the 2025 government shutdown, this extension restores continuity of care for Medicare beneficiaries.

The AMA strongly supports this extension and continues to advocate for permanent authorization of Medicare telehealth flexibilities.

## Alternative payment model (APM) incentives restored

- Section 6204 reinstates APM incentive payments at 3.1% for the 2026 performance year/2028 payment year.
- The legislation lowers the Qualifying Participant (QP) revenue threshold from 75% back to 50% for the same performance year.

These provisions respond directly to AMA advocacy following the expiration of APM bonuses and the automatic QP threshold increase in 2025, restoring meaningful incentives for physician-led value-based care. [Read more](#)

## New Report: Primary Care is Missing Link in America's Fight Against Chronic Disease and Rising Health Care Costs

*For adults with chronic disease, regular primary care access reduces health costs by more than 50%, lowers odds of hospitalization by 20%*

**BOSTON, February 12, 2026** — As the administration continues to invest in efforts to combat the nation's rapid rise in chronic disease, a new national report reveals that people with chronic disease who have a usual source of primary care have better health outcomes and far lower health care costs. Developed by researchers at the Robert Graham Center for Policy Studies in Primary Care and co-funded by the Milbank Memorial Fund and The Physicians Foundation, the [2026 U.S. Primary Care Report](#) finds that having a regular source of primary care is not only associated with a 20% lower hospitalization rate, but also nearly 54% lower health care costs for adults with chronic disease. The health benefits for children with chronic disease who receive routine primary care are even more substantial.

These findings come amid a steady decline in the share of adults and children who have access to a usual source of primary care in the United States. Less than 5% of total U.S. health care expenditures are spent on primary care, and nearly one-third of adults lack a usual source of primary care.

### Key Report Findings Include:

- Regular access to primary care is associated with lower hospitalizations and emergency department visits in adults and children
- Health care costs for people with chronic disease are substantially lower when primary care is part of ongoing care
- People with a usual source of primary care are far more likely to receive preventive services

Along with the report, national and state-by-state performance on key measures of primary care financing, workforce, training, and research are available in an updated [US Primary Care Scorecard data dashboard](#).

### [Read more](#)

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## Administration Launches TrumpRx for Discounted Prescription Drugs

The [New York Times](#) (2/5, Robbins) reports the administration launched [TrumpRx.gov](http://TrumpRx.gov) on “Thursday evening to help American patients use their own money to buy prescription drugs directly from drugmakers.” The website “will not sell drugs. Instead, it is meant to be an entry point where consumers can search for their medicines and then navigate to websites offered by major manufacturers to buy medication directly. Patients still need a prescription.” TrumpRx is expected to “feature dozens of medicines, including well-known and widely used products like Wegovy [semaglutide] and Zepbound [tirzepatide], for weight loss, and Humira [adalimumab], for conditions like arthritis. The prices on the site are expected to vary widely.” It remains unclear “how health insurance will work through TrumpRx” or how many consumers will save money, as “nearly all of the drugs expected to be on the site are already widely covered through insurance.” [Read more](#)

## Number of Medicare Beneficiaries Treated in ACOs Continues to Rise

[Fierce Healthcare](#) (2/5) reports, “The number of Medicare beneficiaries treated in accountable care organizations continues to rise, according to new data from the Trump administration.” CMS “said that 14.3 million people are enrolled in an ACO as of January 2026, up by 4.4% from 13.7 million in 2025.” Meanwhile, “CMS said that for 2026, it approved 134 applications for the Medicare Shared Savings Program, including 72 new participants and 62 returning participants.” [Read more](#)

## Montana Sees 5% Drop in ACA Marketplace Enrollment

Daily Montanan (2/5) Rising costs and expiration of federal subsidies led to nationwide decline. New data released by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services show that fewer Montanans — and Americans overall — have signed up for health plans through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace.

According to Commissioner of Securities and Insurance James Brown, 77,221 Montanans signed up for Marketplace coverage for the 2025 plan year. But the latest CMS data shows that 73,255 Montanans had signed up for the current plan year, a roughly 6% decline.

“This preliminary report indicates that Marketplace plan selections in Montana are down by about 5% compared to last year,” Brown said in a press release. “Our office

will continue monitoring enrollment as final numbers are confirmed, and we remain focused on making sure Montanans understand their coverage options and know where to get help.”

Nationally, CMS reports roughly 23 million consumers signed up for health insurance coverage through the Marketplace for 2026, or were automatically reenrolled, representing a drop of around 1.2 million signups compared to the same period last year. [Read more](#)

## Issue Brief: Medicaid Work Requirements’ Medical Frailty Exemption

AMA (2.9) The enactment of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 (OBBBA, Public Law 119-21) adds mandatory community engagement and work reporting requirements (work requirements) for Medicaid expansion adults, effective January 1, 2027. OBBBA requires states to exempt individuals who are medically frail or have special medical needs, including individuals with serious or complex medical conditions; disabling mental disorders; substance use disorders; or physical, intellectual, or developmental disabilities. Implementing this exemption effectively will be crucial to helping eligible individuals maintain coverage and, thus, access to needed medical care.

A clinically grounded, clear, and comprehensive approach to implementing medical frailty is one of the most important safeguards to ensure eligible people do not lose coverage because of administrative barriers. At a minimum, this requires establishing clear policy definitions of medical frailty; translating those definitions into a comprehensive data strategy to identify people who meet this definition by building a clinically grounded code list; and using all available data sources to automatically verify medical frailty at application and renewal whenever possible.

Decisions made by state Medicaid agencies over the next year regarding medical frailty definitions, screening tools, and verification will determine whether the medical frailty exemption serves as a meaningful protection for patients.

Physicians and other clinicians will be central to: (1) advocating at the state level for medical frailty definitions and verification pathways that reflect clinical reality and do not rely on narrow diagnosis lists or onerous clinician certification processes; and (2) helping patients navigate new rules, identifying when they may qualify for an exemption, and encouraging them to make timely responses to requests for information. [Read more](#)

## Expiration of ACA subsidies may cause thousands of Native Americans to go uninsured this year

[KFF Health News](#) (2/11, Houghton, Rodriguez) reports that enhanced subsidies under the Affordable Care Act “boosted tribal health insurance programs.” ACA marketplace plans allowed “participating Native Americans flexibility to go to outside doctors and clinics when care through the Indian Health Service is unavailable.” Since the subsidies expired on Dec. 31, “tribes are helping people shift to other insurance options and, in some cases, find state programs to cover their premiums.” A report by the Urban Institute “estimates that 125,000 Native Americans will become uninsured in 2026 due to the higher costs.” [Read more](#)

**Fall/Winter Bulletin Now Available**



ADVOCATES FOR ADVANCEMENT

# BULLETIN

Fall/Winter 2025    mmaoffice.org    mma@mmaoffice.org    (406) 443-4000



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/>

## 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/>

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](mailto:lexie@mmaoffice.org)*

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## 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](mailto: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.

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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 19, 2026	Overdose Safety Planning	<a href="#">Free Webinar Series with MPCA</a>
March 27-28, 2026	HELP Graduation	AC Hotel, Bozeman
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@mmaoffice.org](mailto:mma@mmaoffice.org).

## MMA Member Perks

### Gohagan & Company Travel Offers

Embark on an exhilarating European adventure steeped in storied history, grand architecture and breathtaking scenery on this fabulous 12-day, 11-night itinerary featuring a deluxe river cruise plus an unforgettable Swiss getaway. Discover the timeless beauty of the Rhine and Moselle as you wind past storybook towns, terraced vineyards and forested hills crowned by castles. Marvel at the sweeping grandeur of the Alps and Lake Geneva.



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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).

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## Telehealth, Secure Messaging, and More

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## 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

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