



Advocacy | Education | Leadership | Collegiality | Member Perks

## Board of Trustees Interim Meeting

The Montana Medical Association Board of Trustees will be holding their interim meeting on Saturday, March 28 from 1:30 – 3:30 pm. This meeting will be held in a virtual format and MMA members are welcomed to attend.

The Board invites MMA members to present information and comments during the meeting and have set aside time on the agenda at 2:00 pm to hear from you.

If you plan to make comments or attend the meeting, please register by Friday March 27th. Registrants will receive information on joining the meeting after registering.

[MMA Interim BOT Meeting Registration](#)

Join or renew with MMA for 2026 and stand with physicians across Montana.  
Join Here: [MMA Membership](#)

## State Plan Amendment on Medicaid's New Value-Based Care Model Available for Comment

Montana Medicaid is proposing to amend the state plan to implement a new primary care case management program, Primary Care Montana (PCMT), that integrates Passport to Health, Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH), and Comprehensive Primary Care Plus (CPC+) into a single, comprehensive value-based program effective July 1, 2026.

Members are encouraged to review the state plan, informational sheet, and submit comments and questions to DPHHS through March

29 at [dphhscomments@mt.gov](mailto:dphhscomments@mt.gov), (406) 444-2584, or PO Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604-4210. [Read state plan amendment](#). View more details on program: [Montana PCCM Redesign Information](#)

MMA has been engaged with DPHHS on the development of the new program and formed a Value-based Care Model Workgroup. Responding to need for technical assistance for practices, DPHHS contracted with Health Management Associates to provide practice-centered technical assistance. Learn more at a TA Town Hall on April 13 at 11:00 am: [Registration link](#)

## Federal Judge Blocks Administration from Overhauling Childhood Vaccine Schedule

The [New York Times](#) (3/16, Mandavilli) reports a federal judge in Massachusetts on Monday blocked the Administration “from implementing a series of decisions on vaccines made over the last year by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.” The ruling by Judge Brian Murphy, of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts, “also reversed, at least for the time being, all decisions made by the panelists that Mr. Kennedy appointed to the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices. ... The court decision will prevent the committee from meeting later this week, as it was scheduled to do.” [Read more](#)

## Tracking State Readiness to Implement HR 1

The Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy Center for Children and Families is providing a tracker to report on eight state-reported [Medicaid and CHIP performance indicators](#). The analysis of state data is displayed in national maps for the most recent quarter. In addition to national maps, the organization has trended out these performance measures for each state starting with the first quarter of 2024, comparing the state’s performance to the national median.

Montana appears to be one of the states that is underperforming on several of the measures, and improving over time. States that underperform could face additional system and administrative challenges when implementing policy changes mandated by HR 1, the budget reconciliation act. Read more about the metrics in [the report](#) and [the blog](#). These data will be updated for the most recent quarter going forward. [Read More](#)

## Updated 2024-2025 mRNA COVID-19 Vaccine Linked to Moderate Protection Against Severe COVID-19 Outcomes

[Infectious Disease Advisor](#) (3/17, Khaja) reports, “The updated 2024-2025 mRNA COVID-19 vaccine was associated with moderate protection against severe COVID-19 outcomes, including emergency department (ED) visits and hospitalizations, according to study findings.” Exploratory subgroup analyses found “that vaccine protection was most evident among adults aged 65 years and older.” In that “population, vaccine effectiveness against ED visits or more severe care was 39.6%...while protection against hospitalization reached 46.5%.” The [findings](#) were published in the Journal of Infectious Diseases.

## Prior Authorization could keep People from Getting Life-Saving Heart Medications in a Timely Fashion

[HealthDay](#) (3/17, Thompson) reports, “Insurance requirements could keep people from getting life-saving heart medications in a timely fashion, a new study says.” Investigators found that “prescriptions for heart failure medications take two to six times longer to fill if insurance companies require prior authorization.” The [findings](#) were JACC: Advances.

## AMA Physician Practice Benchmark Survey 2024: Physician Compensation

(3/19, [American Medical Association](#)) Yesterday, the American Medical Association released a Policy Research Perspective analyzing trends in physician compensation methods from 2014 to 2024 using novel data from the AMA Physician Practice Benchmark Survey. The findings reveal a marked shift toward blended compensation models, with a growing prevalence of salary, productivity and bonuses in physician compensation structures. The analysis also highlights differences across employment status, gender, specialty and practice type. Overall, physician compensation models have become increasingly blended, balancing financial stability with incentives for productivity, and reflecting broader changes in employment practices and organizational structures in health care over the past decade.

To read the survey results, [click here](#).

## FDA Launches New Adverse Event Look-Up Tool

FDA (3/11) The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today launched a new unified platform for analyzing adverse event reports. This platform — called the [FDA Adverse Event Monitoring System \(AEMS\)](#) — represents a major achievement in the agency’s mission to modernize and provide radical transparency into the safety of regulated products.

“The FDA’s previous adverse event reporting systems were outdated and fragmented and made important data difficult to access. These clunky systems also wasted millions of taxpayer dollars and created blind spots in our postmarket surveillance of products ranging from drugs and vaccines to cosmetics,” **said FDA Commissioner Marty Makary, M.D., M.P.H.** “We’re fixing the problem through a major modernization initiative. Starting today, the FDA will have a single, intuitive adverse event platform that will better serve agency scientists, researchers, and the public.” [Read more Data tool](#)

## Heart Groups Issue New Guideline on Management of Dyslipidemia

[NBC News](#) (3/13, Leake) reported that a guideline from the American College of Cardiology, the American Heart Association, and other groups advises physicians “to begin screening and treating people in their 30s, long before the risks of a heart attack and stroke become significantly higher.” The [guideline](#) was published in JACC. [Read more](#)

## Medicaid Eligibility Rule Changes Will Take Effect July 1,

## State Health Officials Say

Montana Public Radio (3/13) Last year, Congress passed President Donald Trump's Big Beautiful Bill. That legislation increased eligibility checks and added work requirements for people on Medicaid.

Montana is overhauling its Medicaid system so it can verify whether people are working or meet a myriad of exemptions. States have until next year to implement the new rules. Jessie Counts with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services told lawmakers this week that Montana will start July 1. "We will be one of the few states in the nation that are able to go forward as an early adopter," she said. Counts says people won't be kicked off Medicaid until September for not meeting the new requirements. [Read more](#)

## Medicare Advantage Plan Terminations Impacted more than one in 10 Enrollees with Drug Coverage

Senior Contributor Bruce Japsen wrote in [Forbes](#) (3/13) that a new KFF [analysis](#) shows that "upheaval in the Medicare Advantage market triggered 'plan terminations' affecting more than 1 in 10 Americans enrolled in such plans with drug coverage last year." KFF stated insurers that are the biggest players in privatized MA coverage have withdrawn after years expanding their geographic footprints, slowing enrollment growth in 2025, "a trend that continued in 2026." The analysis said, "Plan terminations affected 13% of all enrollees in individual MA-PDs in 2025, a substantially larger share than in previous years (6% of enrollees in individual MA-PDs in 2024 were affected by plan terminations)." [Read more](#)

## FDA Approves Icotrokinra for Moderate-to-Severe Plaque Psoriasis

Medscape (3/18) The FDA has approved icotrokinra (Icotyde, Johnson & Johnson), the first interleukin-23 (IL-23) oral targeted therapy for the treatment of moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis, the manufacturer announced today in a press release.

Icotrokinra, the first oral peptide that blocks the IL-23 receptor, provides complete skin clearance and a favorable safety profile in a once-daily pill. The approved indication is for adults and children at least 12 years old who weigh at least 40 kg (88 pounds) and are candidates for systemic therapy or phototherapy.

"The approval of a novel systemic therapy changes the conversation about treatment options for our community," Leah M. Howard, JD, president and CEO of the National Psoriasis Foundation, said. [Read more](#)

## Higher Costs, Lower Quality, Declining Access, Loss of Primary Care: How can Congress help Health Care?

Medical Economics (3/18) As U.S. medical care gets more and more expensive, family physicians are first-hand witnesses to people choosing between putting food on the table or getting needed health care, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

On March 18, the House Energy & Commerce Committee held the hearing, "[Lowering Health Care Costs for All Americans: An Examination of the U.S. Provider](#)

Landscape.” Martin and five other witnesses discussed the financial actors that, more and more, stop patients from seeking care, despite the nation spending \$5.3 trillion, 18% of gross domestic product, on health care, as of 2024.

The witnesses described a situation that is growing increasingly dire across the United States. The nation’s health care system has dedicated physicians and other clinicians using cutting-edge technology to treat and cure ailments — but patients can’t afford it. A good start would be to improve not just affordability or prices, but Americans’ health, Martin said.

That, in turn, starts with primary care. [Read more](#)

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## Fall/Winter Bulletin Now Available

**MMA**  
MONTANA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
ADVOCATES FOR ADVANCEMENT

# BULLETIN

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

**IN THIS ISSUE:**  
Introducing MMA President, Shawna Yane, D.O.  
MMA Annual Meeting  
State Administrative Rules  
Montana Legislation  
Reform of Prior Authorization Requirements

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.

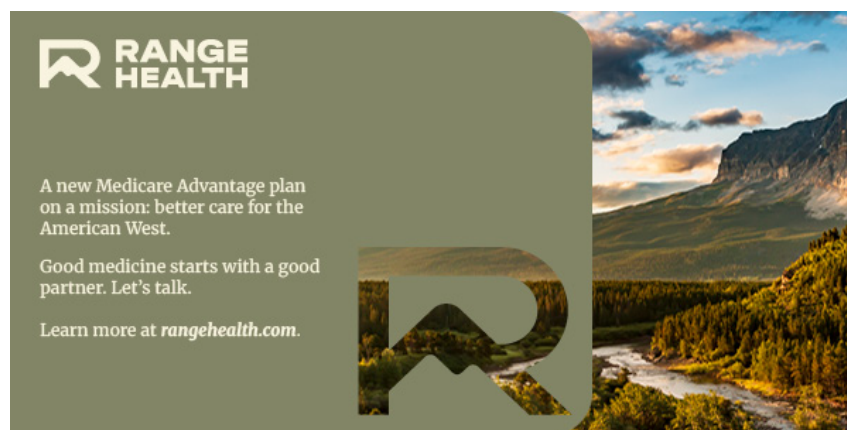


In recent years physicians have faced reputational challenges brought on by broader frustrations with the healthcare system. Recognizing the need to better understand and address these challenges, the American Medical Association's Advocacy Resource Center conducted extensive opinion research and found 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)*



## 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.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

March 25, 2026	Webinar: Addressing Drivers of Health: What Works, What Doesn't, and What's Next	<a href="#">Registration link</a>
March 27-28, 2026	HELP Graduation	AC Hotel, Bozeman
March 27-28, 2026	MMA Interim BOT Meeting	Virtual
May 18-20, 2026	AMN 2026 Addiction Medicine Network and Pain Conference	Butte Copper King Convention Center <a href="#">Registration link</a>

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

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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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