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MMA Membership

Major Healthcare Decisions are Happening in Montana

Big decisions about workforce, care delivery and policy are happening now.

Make sure physicians are being represented- Join MMA today!

Join Here: [MMA Membership](#)

Technical Assistance Available as State Transitions to New Primary Care Montana (PCMT) Program

Montana DPHHS (3/20) Montana Healthcare Programs is preparing to transition from its current primary care case management and medical home programs to a new primary care case management (PCCM) model. Upon federal approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Montana will implement the new Primary Care Montana (PCMT) program with an anticipated start date of July 1, 2026. [Read more](#)

In response to the Montana Medical Association and other stakeholders' strong recommendation for practice-centered technical assistance to help practices transition to the three tiered value-based care model adopted by the Medicaid Program, DPHHS will offer technical assistance. **A PCMT Town Hall and Provider Technical Assistance Kickoff is scheduled for April 13, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** Providers can register for the online town hall at: https://mt.gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4dxnn3KYRBKfP0YGwRqXLQ?#/registration

Share your Practice's Experience with Value-Based Care Models

The Montana Medical Association Value-based Care Model Workgroup and Primary Care Collaborative will continue to advocate for the practices during the short transition and welcomes your feedback in a brief survey on your practice's experience with Value-Based Care Models.

The Montana Medicaid Program is moving to a value-based care model on July 1, 2026. The results of this survey will inform as to the readiness of practices to implement a value-based care model and identify ways to assist practices in this journey. Thank you for the feedback and playing an important role in shaping future discussions and decisions that impact practices across Montana. [Survey Here](#)

Support MTMedPAC – Strengthening Physician Advocacy in Montana

The MTMedPAC is the physicians' vehicle for defending the physician-patient relationship, fighting against the legislation of medicine, and protecting patient safety at the State Legislature by effectively educating those who are elected.

As we continue this important work, [MTMedPAC](#) needs to replenish its resources to remain effective. Your contribution helps strengthen our collective advocacy and ensures physicians are well-represented in policy decisions that impact care across Montana.

We encourage you to complete your membership [here](#) at your earliest convenience. If you are willing, you may also opt to be a resource for legislators seeking a physician's perspective on proposed bills.

Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting Montana's physicians and patients.

Implementing Medicaid Work Requirements: Best Practices

Montana Healthcare Foundation (3/2026) Montana Medicaid provides health care coverage to more than 200,000 Montanans with low income, including children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and adults. In 2016, Montana expanded Medicaid to cover adults with incomes up to 133% of the Federal Poverty Level, or \$20,814 for an individual in 2025.

Under new federal policy, Montana must check whether adults with low income enrolled through Medicaid expansion have completed 80 hours of work or other qualifying community engagement activities a month at enrollment and renewal.

While these work requirements are mandatory, states retain significant discretion in how they are implemented. The strategies Montana chooses for implementing work requirements will have a significant impact on the number of Montanans with low income who lose Medicaid coverage due to administrative factors, even if they are working or exempt from work requirements. [Medicaid Issue Brief](#) [Read more](#)

ON-DEMAND VIRTUAL DEA MATE ACT Requirements Course Expiring Soon

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!



The banner features a dark blue background with a blurred image of a hand writing on a document. On the left is the logo for DECERA CLINICAL Education, and on the right is the MMA MONTANA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION logo. The text in the center reads: 'IS YOUR DEA CERTIFICATE UP FOR RENEWAL?' and 'Complete Mandatory Renewal Requirements in 1 Day!'.

Disclaimer:

This course will expire on May 30, 2026. To receive full credit and receive your certificate, you must complete the course before that date. On May 31, 2026, the course will be removed from the site. No refunds will be issued for course purchases made after May 15, 2026.

[Click Here for more information](#)

CDC Health Alert Network Issues Advisory About Medetomidine

AMA (4/2) The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a [Health Alert Network \(HAN\) advisory](#) this morning about medetomidine being increasingly found in the illegal drug supply. Medetomidine, which is not approved for human use, “can cause profound sedation, bradycardia, and hypotension. Stopping medetomidine following regular use may lead to severe withdrawal, similar to clonidine withdrawal, with symptoms including hypertension, anxiety, nausea, vomiting, and fluctuating alertness, that can require emergency or intensive care,” according to the CDC. The CDC further advises that “because fentanyl is involved in most overdoses involving medetomidine, opioid overdose reversal medications (e.g., [naloxone](#)) should be administered to restore normal breathing in suspected overdoses.”

The full HAN advisory provides additional information, resources and detailed recommendations for clinicians, public health professionals, laboratories and people at risk of overdose.

[Read the full HAN medetomidine advisory here.](#)

CMS Unveils Medicaid Model that Supports Coordination for Children with Complex Needs

Fierce Healthcare (3/25, Minemyer) reports that the administration has introduced a “new payment model that aims to support care management for children in Medicaid with complex medical or behavioral health needs.” Known as Accelerating State Pediatric Innovation Readiness and Effectiveness (ASPIRE), the program “is a 10-year voluntary model that will include up to five states. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services said in a post that the model will put Medicaid providers in a position to take on accountability for these populations.”

FDA Approves Hunter Syndrome Treatment for Children

Reuters (3/25, Das, K) reports the FDA “has approved Denali Therapeutics’ therapy to treat children with a rare genetic disorder, marking the first regulatory green light for the drugmaker in the country.” Marketed as Avlayah (tvidenofusp alfa-eknm), “the enzyme replacement therapy is aimed at treating Hunter syndrome.” Given as a once-a-week “infusion, Avlayah has been approved to treat the neurologic symptoms of the condition in presymptomatic or symptomatic pediatric patients.” But, “continued approval for the treatment may be contingent upon verification of clinical benefit in a confirmatory trial, the company said on Wednesday.” According to Reuters, “the list price of a single-use vial has been set at \$5,200 per 150 milligrams, Denali said, adding that the therapy will be available in the U.S. shortly.”

With Medicaid Work Requirements Approaching, Montana Advocates Make Recommendations to State

KTVH (3/31) HELENA —

New rules are set to take effect this summer, tightening the requirements for people of Montana’s Medicaid program to demonstrate they’re still eligible for coverage. Now, advocates are asking state leaders to take steps to minimize the number of people who may lose coverage.

Starting July 1, Montana will begin implementing “community engagement” requirements, in line with the federal “One Big Bill” passed last year. Most adults enrolled in the state’s Medicaid expansion program will need to work, volunteer or do education, career training or other approved activities 80 hours a month to remain eligible. Some groups are exempted from the requirements, including people 65 and older, pregnant women and parents of children under 13, American Indians and people who are considered “medically frail.” [Read more](#)

Calls to U.S. Poison Centers about Kratom Increased more than 1,200% Between 2015 and 2025

CNN (3/27, Rogers) reported, “Calls to poison centers in the United States about the widely available herb kratom increased more than 1,200% between 2015 and 2025, new research has found.” Investigators “analyzed data from the National Poison Data System and found that calls steadily increased from 2015 to 2019, plateaued from 2020 to 2024 and surged in 2025.” The researchers found that “last year, there were 3,434 kratom poisoning reports in the U.S., a record number, up from only 258 calls in 2015.” The findings were published in the CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

Making Montana Healthy Again: Gov. Gianforte Submits

Waiver To Reform SNAP

Montana DPHHS (3/31) HELENA, Mont. – Governor Greg Gianforte today submitted a waiver to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins to restrict purchases in Montana’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to healthy, nutritious foods instead of soft drinks, junk food, and candy.

“For too long, leaders in Washington have ignored the root causes of chronic disease that affect the lives of Americans across our country,” Gov. Gianforte said. “Thanks to the strong leadership of President Donald J. Trump, Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, and Secretary Rollins, we are taking bold steps to Make America Healthy Again. Montana is proud to join them in the effort to prioritize access to nutrient-rich foods to help improve health outcomes.”

SNAP is a \$99.8 billion federal program that supplements the nutritional needs of low-income families. According to a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) study, approximately 20 percent of SNAP’s yearly spending is used to buy unhealthy drinks and foods. [Read more](#)

Federal Rural Health Funding could Trigger Service Cuts

Montana Free Press (3/27) BIG SANDY — The emergency department at Big Sandy Medical Center is one room with a single curtain between two beds. It’s one of the many parts of the 25-bed rural hospital that need updating, former CEO Ron Wiens said.

He said the hospital, an essential service in its namesake town of nearly 800 residents in the state’s sprawling north-central high plains, needs at least \$1 million for deferred maintenance, including a failing HVAC system. But the facility has struggled to make payroll each month and can’t afford to make all the fixes, Wiens said. [Read more](#)

Lawmakers Seek to Protect Crisis Pregnancy Centers as Abortion Clinic Numbers Shrink

Montana Free Press (3/19) Conservative lawmakers in multiple states are pushing legislation drafted by an anti-abortion advocacy group to increase protections for crisis pregnancy centers, organizations that provide some health-related services but also work to dissuade women from having abortions.

The legislation would prohibit state and local governments from requiring crisis pregnancy centers to perform abortions, provide referrals for abortion services, or inform patients about such services or contraception options. It also would allow crisis pregnancy centers to sue the violating government entity. [Read more](#)

ACA Premium Spike Funnels more Consumers into High-Deductible Plans: CMS

HealthcareDive (3/30) Average premiums for ACA plans increased 58% after more generous financial assistance expired, while enrollment in low-premium, high-deductible bronze plans jumped, according to new federal data. [Read more](#)

8 Medicare Advantage Numbers to Know in 2026

Becker's Hospital Review (3/27) Medicare Payment Advisory Commission insights, Congressional reports and enrollment data have all been released in the early months of 2026. Some methodology has been questioned by insurers and CMS, even directly on the Congressional floor.

Despite the challenges, here are eight data points to know about where Medicare Advantage stands in 2026 — and where they come from: [Read more](#)

CDC Immunization Report finds Declines in 5 Childhood Vaccines by Age 2

AHA (3/27) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention March 26 released a [report](#) on U.S. child vaccination coverage by age 2. The report found that coverage among children born from 2021-2022 was similar to those born in 2019-2020 but noted decreases for five vaccines. The CDC found declines in vaccinations for the flu (7.4 percentage points), the birth dose of the hepatitis B vaccine (1.8 percentage points), rotavirus (1.7 percentage points), the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (1.5 percentage points) and the primary series of the Haemophilus influenzae type b conjugate vaccine (1 percentage point). The report also found that coverage varied by race and ethnicity, poverty status, urbanicity and jurisdiction.

“Vaccines have substantially reduced severe illness, hospitalization, and death and have saved approximately \$2.7 trillion in societal costs,” the CDC wrote. “Although national vaccination coverage remained stable for most vaccines, lower coverage among certain population subgroups and in some jurisdictions is creating an increased risk for outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.” [Full report](#)

CMS Launches Model to Improve Care Coordination for Children and Families

AMA (2/25) CHICAGO — The American Medical Association (AMA) welcomed today a [newly announced care model](#) from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) designed to help Medicaid families better navigate and coordinate their health care.

The initiative seeks to address longstanding fragmentation in care delivery by connecting physicians with a broader network of providers. By fostering stronger collaboration, the model aims to support more effective, long-term management of chronic diseases and other complex health needs. Under the pilot program, Medicaid families will be paired with a dedicated provider responsible for guiding them through the health care system and coordinating services. [Read more](#)

Lifestyle Approaches to Promote Brain Health and Maintain Cognition

AMA (4/2) Curious how to reduce the risk of cognitive impairment, like MCI or dementia? Join AMA Board Chair [David Aizuss, MD](#), for a panel discussion on lifestyle factors that impact dementia risk and ways physicians can help patients better maintain cognitive health at different stages of life. [Register here](#)

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Fall/Winter Bulletin Now Available



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IN THIS ISSUE:

Introducing MMA President, Shaena Yates, D.O.

MMA Annual Meeting

State Administrative Rules

Montana Legislation

Reforms 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.

**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

April 13, 2026	PCMT Town Hall - Provider TA Kickoff	Registration Link
April 15, 2026	Lifestyle Approaches to Promote Brain Health and Maintain Cognition	Registration Link
May 18-20, 2026	AMN 2026 Addiction Medicine Network and Pain Conference	Butte Copper King Convention Center Registration link

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

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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](#)

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