

Montana Rural Health Association

Montana Health Care Forum

The Montana Healthcare Forum is a community of stakeholders and involved members of the public who are interested in Montana's healthcare policy and reform. The Forum was first started in 2007 with the mission "to develop innovative changes to take the health care system in Montana through the engagement of stakeholders across Big Sky country".

Recently they held their 3rd Annual Conference in Bozeman Montana on November 19-20. The conference had high numbers of attendance by many medical professionals, public health professionals, legislators, and advocates as well as students in

WWAMI, Physician Assistant programs, and Public Health programs.

The two-day conference was jam-packed with an agenda of speakers discussing this year's theme of "Understanding the Evolving Landscape of Health Care". Such speakers included Dr. Elliot Fisher of the Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care, John Sheils of The Lewin Group, and Dr. David Kibbe of the American Academy of Family Physicians as well as many others.

Much of the discussion from this year's forum was focused on the healthcare reform and how it will affect the Montana community. Understanding how these changes in healthcare will be implemented at the state level was discussed, as well as how the forum stakeholders will implement solutions for the health care disparities within Montana.

The more hands-on portion of the conference came within the different forum workgroups. Each focused one of five different strategic directions for the forum, which included:

- Improving the Health of Montana's Population
- Expanding access to Affordable Coverage
- Improving Quality of Care
- Building & Supporting Montana's Healthcare Workforce
- Managing Healthcare Costs

These workgroups were established to discuss and analyze how Montanans can get the greatest value out of the money they spend on healthcare. According to the website, the workgroups strive to do this through increased affordability, coverage, access, quality, transparency, efficiency, adequacy of benefits, evidence-based medicinal practice, consumer engage-



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ment, realistic expectations of healthcare, and administrative simplicity.

Formed in January 2007, the workgroups now consist of over 90 volunteer forum participants with a Montana contact list approximately twice that size.

You may be asking yourself how to get involved in the Montana Healthcare Forum or how you can find out more information. Your questions can be answered through the Contact Us page on the website at:

<http://www.montana-healthcareforum.com/>

Other contact information for the Montana Healthcare Forum:

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PO Box 5119 Helena, MT
59604

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Email: joan@mtha.org

Or
info@montanahealthcareforum.com



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Electronic Rural Health Care Resource List

A new resource is available on the Montana AHEC and Office of Rural Health website! Beginning in November 2009, the MRHA page will provide a link to a comprehensive list of state and national websites that are likely to help you find the answers to many of your health-related questions. The focus of the list provides links to Montana health initiatives, education centers, and networks that

work for bettering the health of all Montanans. Information includes topics on primary care, nutrition, environmental health, rural health affairs, and much more. Also included in the list are the links to nation-wide organizations that can give a broad understanding of health issues in the US and around the world. Underneath each resource name, a link is provided as well as a brief overview of the

organization and/or what the website entails. So feel free to go onto the website <http://healthinfo.montana.edu/mrha.html> and learn something new!

To add or request additional resources please contact: rpearson@montana.edu

23rd NW Regional Rural Health Conference

WEATHERING *the* PERFECT STORM: *challenges & changes*

March 24-25, 2010 — Red Lion Hotel at the Park — Spokane, Washington

Plan to join your colleagues from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska to share strategies and cutting edge ideas, discuss new innovations and out-of-the-box ideas, and share success stories during these economic times that may be brewing the perfect storm. This year's conference focus is on weathering economic challenges and changes through sharing proven tips, tools, methods or initiatives. Sessions will focus on an exchange of information about programs and innovative strategies that can be models for changing rural health and health care delivery at the state and regional levels.



This conference is produced with support by state offices of rural health for Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Funding provided by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy.

Montana Targeted Rural and Underserved Track (TRUST)

The goal of the TRUST Program of the Montana WWAMI Medical School at Montana State University is to increase the number of Montana WWAMI students choosing to enter primary care, or other needed specialties, - and - following residency training, return to practice medicine in rural communities, or in clinics providing care to low income/underserved patients. Medical students selected for the TRUST Program are required to do a two-week pre-matriculation clinical rotation in a community and with a physician selected by the WWAMI Program in consultation with the students.

A second long week-end (3 day) clinical/community rotation is required during the first semester of medical school. In the summer following the first year of medical school, the TRUST students return to the same rural community for a one month rotation through the Rural/Underserved Opportunities Program (R/UOP). During the third and fourth years of medical school, the TRUST students are given priority for clerkships and other clinical education program opportunities in Montana.

This model TRUST Program developed by the Montana WWAMI Medical School has been accepted by the University of Washington School of Medicine. It is now part of the *underserved pathway* in the Department of Family Medicine. In addition, the

TRUST Program has been adopted by the first year WWAMI Program in Spokane, Washington.

Another “spin-off” of the TRUST Program is an increased interest in bringing information about rural health to the attention of second year medical students at the University of Washington. This includes the development of a new rural health course which is offered as a selective for these students.

As part of TRUST at Montana State University, the WWAMI Program initiated a new course entitled *Rural Health Care Delivery Systems*. All TRUST students are required to take the course, but it is open to all of the medical students. During the current semester (Fall 2009), 19 of the 20 WWAMI students chose to take the course.

The names, community assignments and physicians preceptors of the 2009 TRUST students are as follows:

- Brooke Christiaens; Helena (Community Health Center); Will Snider, D.O.
- Hans Hurt; Libby; Greg Rice, M.D.
- Abby Kelly; Lewistown; Laura Bennett, M.D.
- Talya Lorenz; Wolf Point; Mark Zilkowski, M.D.
- Andrea Prasch; Hardin; Kristin Morissette, M.D.

In the summer of 2008, a grant was submitted to *Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Montana* to obtain funding to assist with expenses of the TRUST Program. In September 2009, a three year grant in the amount of \$35,000 per year was awarded to the WWAMI Program at Montana State University.

The Montana Office of Rural Health and the Montana Area Health Education Centers are directly involved in the TRUST Program in the following activities:

- (1) arranging for community-based clinical rotations with physicians,
- (2) paying for travel costs,
- (3) teaching the rural health course,
- (4) providing student memberships in the National Rural Health Association
- (5) liaison with the Director of the Montana Clinical Education Programs (Jay Erickson, M.D.) and
- (6) collaboration with the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Washington School of Medicine.

For further information on the TRUST program, please contact Frank Newman at:

fnewman@montana.edu
or call
406-994-7510



NRHA Conference Calendar

December 9-11

Multiracial and Multicultural Health Conference
Memphis, TN

January 25-27

Rural Health Policy Institute
Washington, DC

May 18

Rural Medical Educators Conference
Savannah, GA

May 18-21

2010 Annual Rural Health Conference
Savannah, GA

June 16-18

Medication Use in Rural America Conference
Kansas City, MO

July 21-23

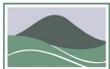
Quality and Clinical Conference
Portland, ME

September 28-29

Rural Health Clinic Conference
Kansas City, MO



Improving the Health of 62 Million Rural Americans
www.RuralHealthWeb.org



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