

Montana Rural Health Association

New Rural Health Workforce Grant



Montana Rural Health

Fall 2010

The Montana AHEC Program Office has been awarded a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) entitled Rural Health Workforce Development Program. The project period for this new grant is from September 1, 2010 through August 31, 2013. Funding for the first year of the grant is \$200,000.

The main purpose of the Montana Rural Health Workforce Development Program will be to address ways to improve access and quality of health care in rural communities throughout the entire state of Montana. The grant will focus on shortages of primary care physicians and other health care providers. The network model will be based on: (1) selection of rural-based medical students, (2) placement of medical students in rural communities for clinical observations and community experience, (3) placement of medical students in rural communities for clerkships and other clinical training, (4) assisting medical students with the transition to primary care residencies and (5) encouraging students to choose practices in rural communities, or in other underserved areas.

As a requirement for the grant, the Montana AHEC Program Office has established a Montana Rural Health Workforce Network Governing Board.

Members of the governing board are as follows:

- Dick Brown, President of the Montana Hospital Association, Chair of Governing Board
- Lil Anderson, President of RiverStone Health
- Jay Erickson, M.D., Assistant Dean, Regional WWAMI Clinical Programs
- Roxanne Fahrenwald, Director, MT Family Medicine Residency
- Dave Forbes, Dean, College of Health Professions, University of Montana
- Tom Greer, M.D., Department of Family Medicine, University of Washington
- Kris Juliar, Director, MT AHEC and MT Office of Rural Health
- Loren Schrag, Executive Director of HealthShare Montana
- Martin Teintze, Director of MT WWAMI Medical School, Montana State University
- Jane Shelby, Executive Director, Division of Health Sciences, Montana State University.

The Montana Rural Health Workforce Development Program will accomplish the following goals:

- (1) develop and publish a Network Strategic Plan,
- (2) develop and maintain partnerships with primary care physicians, critical access hospitals,

rural health clinics and community health centers, (3) develop, initiate and maintain a continuity curriculum of rural community-based training from pre-medicine through residency training, and (4) develop a sustainable strategy.

The announcement of Rural Health FY 2010 Grant Awards by HRSA Secretary Kathleen Sebelius on August 23, 2010 included \$22.8 million for the Rural Hospital Flexibility Program (Flex), \$3.9 million for Rural Health Workforce Development Grant Awards, \$2.0 million for the Telehealth Network Grant Program, \$1.3 million for the Telehealth Resource Center Grant Program, \$890,000 for the Flex Rural Veterans Health Access Program, \$770,000 for the Frontier Community Health Integration Demonstration Program and \$450,000 for the Rural Training Track Technical Assistance Demonstration Program. In addition to the Montana AHEC Rural Health Workforce Development Grant Award, another award was made to St. Luke's Community Hospital in Ronan, Montana. Montana was the only state to receive two awards.

An Interview with Dr. Ben Bullington: Singer, Songwriter, & Rural Montana Doctor



Dr. Ben Bullington has a unique set of skills; the mind of a doctor and the heart of a musician. These traits have worked in harmony for Dr. Bullington as both a sense of challenge and enjoyment resulting in a fulfilling lifestyle. Known for his poetic lyrics, he finds balance in his medical practice in Big Timber and has learned to make time for his music which allows him to play shows around Montana and record his music.

He began at the young age of 15 playing guitar, wrote songs through high school and college and kept on learning the skills of music. The spark was rekindled during medical school and Dr. Bullington began to play his lyrics and music for a release from the stressors of academic life. Although music was never viewed as a possible career path, Dr. Bullington has always stayed true to his passion for the

music. Nashville, the location of the medical school he attended, was an intimidating place for an aspiring musician and really gave Dr. Bullington a sense of the hardship and sacrifice it took to commit to music as a career.

Throughout his academic endeavors Dr. Bullington had always possessed a conviction to serve rural areas as a medical professional. His interest in Montana began early when working for the oil fields and visiting geological sites around the state. As a native Virginian he had always figured on practicing medicine in his home state. As Montanans will attest, there is something about the Big Sky state that pulls you to come back. This pull brought Dr. Bullington back to Montana as a general practitioner and his roots began to grow. His opinion of the rural Montana communities he has served includes the apt description of “good, solid people” and has truly found his home in this state.

Although it may seem that music and medicine do not partner well, Dr. Bullington would disagree. He has found his time spent around people, listening to use of language, and real life situations can all be sources of inspiration for his music and lyrics.

Dr. Ben Bullington is fully committed and loves his life as a medical doctor but is able to enjoy the music he makes and finds a sense of accomplishment equally in his two passions.

To learn more about Dr. Ben Bullington and to find his music please visit his website at benbullington.com. His new CD titled *Satisfaction Garage*, along with his other albums, can be purchased through a link on his website at cdbaby.com.



Deer Lodge, MT breaks ground on new hospital

Deer Lodge, MT, August 2, 2010 - Construction has begun on the site of the new hospital in Deer Lodge, Montana. The new 43,000 SF Deer Lodge Medical Center will replace the existing Powell County Medical Center, which has provided medical services to communities in the Deer Lodge Valley since 1964.

The goals of the new hospital are to provide more outpatient healthcare services in Deer Lodge, while also creating a more efficient and welcoming environment. Hospital administrators are confident that a modern hospital will keep more healthcare dollars in Deer Lodge and assist in recruiting and retaining physicians and staff to the community.

Services provided in the new facility will include emergency department, laboratory, surgery, imaging, physical therapy and clinic services. The hospital will also feature 16 inpatient beds for overnight patient stays.

The interior design of the facility is dedicated to wellness, utilizing soothing colors and promoting a quiet atmosphere. The main Galleria of the new hospital will have a look and feel like a Montana lodge, providing a comfortable environment and a strong link to the local community.

The hospital will not use any county taxpayer money to build the new hospital; the Powell County Memorial Hospital replacement facility was financed with \$17.855 million of tax-exempt bonds. The bonds were issued by the Montana Facility Finance Authority and were sold with an average interest rate of approximately 4.6%. The Hospital's low cost of funds was made possible by the credit enhancement provided by the Board of Investments of the State of Montana's Master Loan Program. A small portion of bonds were sold on an unenhanced basis. Dougherty & Company LLC was the bond underwriter.

Deer Lodge Medical Center will be located on the north central edge of town next to Interstate 90, providing



convenient access and increased visibility. The hospital expects to start seeing patients in the new facility in August 2011.

About Powell County Memorial Hospital Association, Inc. (dba Deer Lodge Medical Center)

The Powell County Memorial Hospital Association, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not for profit corporation operating as a Critical Access Hospital (CAH) in Deer Lodge, Montana. The hospital serves as a primary, full service medical center to communities throughout the Deer Lodge Valley. More information at <http://www.pcmh.org>.





NRHA Conference Calendar

December 1-3

Rural Multiracial and Multicultural
Health Conference
Tucson, AZ

January 24-26

Rural Health Policy Institute
Washington, DC

May 3-6

Annual Rural Health Conference
Austin, TX

May 3

Rural Medical Educators Conference
Austin, TX



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Change Services Requested
