



Office of Rural Health
Area Health
Education Center

Montana Area Health Education Center
Office of Rural Health

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BYLAWS
MONTANA AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER
AND OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH

ARTICLE I. NAME AND OFFICES

The organization shall be known as the **Montana Area Health Education Center and Office of Rural Health** (Montana AHEC/ORH). The Montana AHEC/ORH is located in the MSU College of Nursing, and affiliated with the WWAMI Program of the University of Washington School of Medicine and the Regional WWAMI AHEC Program. The Montana AHEC/ORH shall be located on the campus of Montana State University-Bozeman serving the needs of the citizens of the state of Montana.

ARTICLE II. MISSION AND GOALS

Section 1. Mission

The overall mission of the Montana AHEC is the same as the National AHEC Program mission, which is:

To enhance access to quality health care, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals through community/academic educational partnerships.

The mission of the Montana ORH is “to serve its communities through: (1) collecting and disseminating information within the state, (2) improving recruitment and retention of health professionals into rural areas, (3) providing technical assistance to attract more federal, state, and foundation funding for rural health, and (4) coordinating rural health interests and activities across the state.”

Section 2. Goals

The goals of the Montana AHEC are to:

1. improve the supply, distribution, utilization and support of healthcare professionals;
2. improve access to educational resources for healthcare providers in the State of Montana;
3. encourage, strengthen and support rural healthcare institutions/agencies/facilities in becoming access points for the education of healthcare providers; and
4. enhance the quality and efficiency of academic programs in the health professions.

The goals of the Montana ORH are to:

1. Establish and maintain a State clearinghouse for collecting and disseminating information on rural health care issues, research findings related to rural health care, and innovative approaches to the delivery of health care in rural areas.
2. Coordinate activities carried out in the state that relate to rural health care; including providing coordination to avoid duplication in such activities.
3. Identify Federal, State and nongovernmental programs regarding rural health and provide technical assistance to public and nonprofit entities regarding participation in such programs.
4. Encourage recruitment and retention of health professionals in rural areas.
5. Participate in strengthening State, local and Federal partnerships in rural health.

Section 3. Objectives and Aims

The Montana AHEC/ORH mission and goals are accomplished by pursuing the following objectives and aims to:

1. facilitate productive networks and linkages between healthcare units to the benefit of underserved frontier and rural communities;
2. foster and encourage collaborative community-based health programs that serve to stabilize local rural healthcare systems as an aid to recruitment and retention;
3. increase the number of minority and underserved youth entering health education programs;
4. serve as a resource, clearinghouse and disseminator of health information and data relating to health professions education, health provider education, and continuing education;
5. promote improved health and disease prevention through educational interventions;
6. respond to emerging community-based unmet needs regarding health issues especially in regard to workforce issues and Community Health Services Development;
7. provide technical assistance and support to community health systems on healthcare-related issues underserved, rural and remote communities;
8. contribute to achieving the goals of *Healthy People* with special attention on reducing health disparities and thereby improving the health status and health outcomes for frontier, rural, and underserved constituents; and
9. help implement collaborative community-based, multidisciplinary education and training for health professionals and health professions students and thereby strengthen the capacity to serve health professionals, students and communities.

ARTICLE III. ADVISORY BOARD

Section 1. Composition of the Advisory Board

The Advisory Board shall be comprised of healthcare providers, health professions educators and consumers and representatives of health interest groups. The Advisory Board shall consist of a balanced representation reasonably divided between institutions, agencies, organizations and health interest groups with special appreciation for geographic, demographic, and programmatic representation. The Advisory Board shall determine the optimum size and make-up of the Board based on current organizational and programmatic needs.

The following areas of representation should be included:

- Health professions education
- Health professions practice
- Underserved/under-represented populations
- Legislative
- Healthcare Administration
- Consumer/Public
- State Agency Representation
- Resident/Student(s) in a Montana medical/health profession program

Ex-officio representatives – Regional AHEC Directors; Dean of Nursing at MSU. Additional *ex-officio* member could serve at the pleasure of the Dean of the School of Medicine at the University of Washington or the President of Montana State University. The *ex-officio* members shall not have voting privileges.

The size of the advisory board, including ex-officio members, should not exceed 25 members.

Section 2. Powers and Duties

The Advisory Board shall advise the chief administrative official of the center on all major policies concerning the operation of the center, on establishment of center program priorities and on other issues as necessary, including administration and evaluation. The Advisory Board shall have the responsibility and authority to perform all duties stated in these ByLaws and to make other recommendations as it may deem appropriate and necessary to facilitate the accomplishment of the mission, goals and objectives of the Montana AHEC/ORH.

Included among the functions of the Advisory Board are:

1. conduct annual reviews of the mission, goals, objectives, programmatic activities and policies of the Montana AHEC/ORH;
2. make recommendations on changes in the mission, goals, objectives and programmatic activities;
3. promote the Montana AHEC/ORH as a statewide resource;
4. serve as an advocate for the educational needs of healthcare providers in Montana;
5. participate in annual strategic planning; and
6. advocate for rural health needs of Montana.

Section 3. Election and/or Appointment

The board shall be appointed by vote of two-thirds of the board membership. Members of the Advisory Board shall serve for three years, with all members being eligible for reappointment. A member of the Board may be removed by a vote of two-thirds of the entire membership of the board as then constituted.

Section 4. Officers, Terms and Duties

The **Advisory Board Chair (Chair)** shall be elected by the board and shall serve at the pleasure of the board for a term of three years. The Chair shall also serve as **Chair of the Executive Committee**. The Chair shall preside over meetings of the Advisory Board. The Chair is an *ex-officio* member of committees. The Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall appoint **Standing Committees**, and **Ad Hoc Committees**; with the exception of the **Nominating Committee**.

The **Vice Chair** shall be elected by the board and serve at the pleasure of the board for a term of three years. The Vice Chair shall preside in the absence of the Chair. The Vice Chair shall assist the Chair, as directed, in fulfilling the administrative responsibilities and duties of the Advisory Board. If the position of Vice Chair shall become vacant, that position shall be filled by election through a majority vote of the Advisory Board and serve for the duration of the term.

Section 5. Quorum

A quorum for any meeting of the Advisory Board shall consist of the majority of the entire voting membership of the board as then constituted. If a quorum is not present for any meeting, the Chair may declare, in the absence of an objection by the majority of members present, that a quorum is present in order to conduct the scheduled business agenda of the board.

Section 6. Meetings

The Advisory Board shall hold at least three meetings during each calendar year. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Chair or by a majority vote of the board. Notice of the time and place of meetings of the board shall be given to each board member. Notification of regular meetings shall be sent at least one month in advance of the scheduled meeting. Meetings of the Advisory Board, Executive Board, and committees of the board shall be open meetings. The Chair may declare a meeting closed to discuss personnel issues and other items declared to be confidential or personal. In general, the policy on open meetings shall be that of Montana State University. Minutes of the Advisory Board, Executive Board and committees of the board shall be written and circulated to members.

Section 7. Meeting Location and Scheduled Dates

The decision on location and dates for meetings shall be made by the Chair in consultation with the Director of the Montana AHEC/ORH. The Director of the Montana AHEC/ORH and his/her staff shall assume the responsibility for making arrangements for meetings; including notification of members. Members have the option to participate by conference call for all meetings.

Section 8. Travel Reimbursement

Members of the board may submit claims for reimbursement of travel expenses to attend meetings in amounts allowed by Montana State University.

ARTICLE IV. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Nominating Committee

There shall be a **Nominating Committee** consisting of two or more members elected by the board. Members of the Nominating Committee shall serve a term of three years. The duties of the Nominating Committee shall be to:

1. submit names for members of the board to serve as Chair and Vice Chair;
2. submit names to the board of persons to be considered as new members of the board; and
3. contact appropriate health provider organizations/associations to solicit suggestions for board membership.

Section 2. Executive Committee

The **Executive Committee** shall consist of the Chair, Vice Chair and Chairs of Standing and Ad Hoc Committees. The Executive Committee shall:

1. perform the necessary duties of the board which may occur between scheduled meetings;
2. appoint Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees;
3. work with the Montana AHEC/ORH staff to schedule meetings and provide information to the board;
4. maintain liaison with the Dean of Nursing;
5. review and act on recommendations of the committees of the board; and
6. conduct other activities as needed.

Section 3. Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees

Individual Advisory Board members may submit recommendations to the board that assist in accomplishing the mission, goals, objectives and programmatic activities of the AHEC/ORH. In the event of special circumstances and/or issues of urgency, the Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, may appoint members to Standing Committees or Ad Hoc Committees to assist the Montana AHEC/ORH staff. These committees may be appointed on an ad hoc basis to assist the board in its essential functions of:

1. program development;
2. public relations;
3. health professions education;
4. evaluation; and
5. others as suggested by the board and AHEC/ORH staff.

ARTICLE V. DIRECTOR OF THE MONTANA AHEC/ORH

The Director of the Montana AHEC/ORH shall be an employee of Montana State University. The Director shall report administratively to the Dean of Nursing and shall maintain liaison with the Regional WWAMI AHEC Program at the University of Washington School of Medicine. The **Affiliation Agreement and Memorandum of Cooperation** between the University of Washington School of Medicine and the Montana AHEC/ORH at Montana State University shall be utilized by the Director as a guide to the performance of responsibilities and duties. The Director shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Montana AHEC/ORH office and its programs. The Advisory Board shall have the responsibility to make recommendations to the Director.

ARTICLE VI. FUNDING

Funding for the Montana AHEC/ORH is a responsibility of Montana State University. Sources of funding may include:

1. state allocations provided by Montana State University;
2. grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements available through federal, state, and private sources;
4. foundation grants and gifts.

The Advisory Board shall make recommendations on seeking new funding for the Montana AHEC/ORH. The Montana AHEC/ORH shall provide the board with annual programmatic and financial reports and other funding information as requested by the board.

ARTICLE VII. AMENDMENTS

The Advisory Board, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of its total membership, may alter, amend, or revoke these ByLaws at any regular or special meetings of the board.

(Bylaws updated February, 2013)