



# Montana Rural Health Association

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## Montana Office of Rural Health Plans Third Annual National Rural Health Day Celebration



Montana Rural Health

Fall 2013

The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health [NOSORH] created National Rural Health Day in 2011 to showcase rural America and increase awareness of rural health-related issues. “National Rural Health Day gives NOSORH and its partners the opportunity to ‘Celebrate the Power of Rural’ and tout the good work being performed by America’s 59.5 million rural citizens,” notes NOSORH Director Teryl Eisinger. “It also allows us to highlight the unique healthcare issues facing rural citizens and promote the efforts of NOSORH, State Offices of Rural Health [SORHs] and their partners in addressing those issues.”

SORHs in particular play a key role in addressing those needs, Eisinger explains. All 50 states maintain a SORH, each of which shares a similar mission: to foster relationships, disseminate information and provide technical assistance that improves access to quality health care for rural citizens. “Together, these State Offices provide technical assistance to more than 28,000 rural communities each year,” she says. This year, local, state and national rural stakeholders

alike will be celebrating the third annual National Rural Health Day on

**Thursday, November 21, 2013.**

The Montana Office of Rural Health looks forward to promoting the power of rural by offering a statewide community success story contest, sharing the message of rural health achievements to local media outlets, and requesting a Gubernatorial Proclamation in order to recognize National Rural Health Day in Montana.

To learn more about both nationwide and statewide celebration efforts, please visit

<http://celebratepowerofrural.org> or  
<http://montanaruralhealthinitiative.info>.



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## Health Insurance Marketplaces in Montana

Open enrollment in the Health Insurance Marketplaces, the key component in the Affordable Care Act (ACA), opened October 1, 2013. With the new Insurance Marketplace, consumers will be able to shop for and enroll in health insurance coverage. For those who purchase health insurance prior to December 15th, their coverage will begin January 1, 2014.

There are many web resources available to help find health insurance through the Marketplaces. These sites were created to help people better understand the complexities of the new federal law and to help

consumers make the best insurance choices for themselves and their family.

Three great web-based resources: Montana Health Insurance Answers [montana-healthanswers.com](http://montana-healthanswers.com) is the site developed by MT’s Insurance Commissioner Monica Lindeen;

[Healthcare.gov](http://Healthcare.gov) is the federal site to find information regarding the Health Insurance Marketplace; and

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation [Kkf.org](http://Kkf.org) provides consumer information and answers to frequently asked questions.

# Montana Makes Headway in Academic Progression in Nursing

By: Kailyn Dorhauer



In August 2012, Montana received the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) *Academic Progression in Nursing* (APIN) grant, which is a two year, \$300,000 project to advance state strategies to help increase both the diversity and education levels of the Montana nursing workforce. The APIN grant from RWJF focuses on the Institute of Medicine's research-based recommendation to increase the percentage of nurses with a BSN [Bachelors of Science in Nursing] or higher degree to 80% by 2020 in order to improve health care outcomes. The APIN grant was awarded to the Montana Area Health Education Center, a part of the MSU College of Nursing on behalf of the Montana Action Coalition. In addition to Montana, states chosen to receive APIN grants are California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington.



The Montana APIN team has been working diligently with both academic institutions and practice partners to foster higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression. The Montana APIN Preceptor Continuing Education Program and the Mentoring Program will help strengthen academic-practice relationships and are to be launched this fall. The purpose of the Preceptor Continuing Education Program is to prepare preceptors to effectively support the development of students in their academic progression. Nurses who participate in the asynchronous webinars will earn free contact hours through the Montana Nurses Association. The Mentoring Program was designed to connect RN [Registered Nurse] students enrolled in a bachelor's degree program with a mentor who is an experienced RN and has a bachelor's degree in nursing. The purpose of this program is to provide encouragement and support to RNs who are pursuing a baccalaureate degree in nursing so that they will successfully finish their program of study and feel confident in their new skills.

If you are interested in learning more about Montana APIN, please visit <http://mtcahn.org> or contact Kailyn Dorhauer at [kailyn.dorhauer@montana.edu](mailto:kailyn.dorhauer@montana.edu).

## Building Active Communities Initiative Community Transformation in Montana

By: Cathy Costakis

In the spring of 2012 the state of Montana received a Community Transformation Grant to promote healthy lifestyles and healthy communities, especially among populations experiencing the greatest burden of chronic disease. This grant will help improve health, reduce health disparities and lower healthcare costs. The overall *Community Transformation Plan* outlines the development and implementation of six activities by 2016. One of these six activities addresses the connection between public health and community design and is part of the *Montana Building Active Communities Initiative (BACI)*.

The *Building Active Communities Initiative* is a project of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services' Nutrition and Physical Activity Program (NAPA) in collaboration with Montana State University, the Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department, and RiverStone Health.

Land use, community design, and transportation planning have an impact on the health of citizens in relation to chronic diseases and injuries, as well as quality of life and well-being. The goal of the BAC Initiative is to create or enhance community environments so that people of all ages, abilities and income levels can safely walk, bike or take public transportation to places they need to go whether that is a school, a grocery store, a workplace, or a local park. Montana communities interested in building healthy, walkable and vibrant places are provided technical assistance, training and resources to encourage adoption of sustainable strategies.

Six communities participated in BAC Initiative in 2013. Those communities were: Butte, Glendive, Great Falls, Kalispell, Lewistown, and Sidney. A team of community members from each of the six



communities participated in a two-day Action Institute held in March 2013.

National expert and keynote speaker Mark Fenton facilitated a lively conversation to get the Action Institute participants warmed up and engaged. As part of their introductions he asked them to recall their earliest childhood

memory of being physically active. This sparked a conversation about how most of the participants in the room grew up as “free range kids” where they were free to play in their neighborhood as well as walk or bike to school on their own. There was agreement from the group that many children today do not enjoy that type of freedom and parents do not feel comfortable letting their children explore their environment without close supervision.

Many aspects of active community design that encourages physical activity were discussed: varied destinations within walk, bike, & transit distance; a connected network of facilities (trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, transit); designs that are functional & inviting for pedestrians, bicyclists, & transit users and safe & accessible for all ages, incomes, and abilities.

The group participated in a “walking audit” that showcased various aspects of the community with regards to health and transportation. The goal of the walking audit was to train the participants to see differently and then give them the skills and resources to conduct walking audits in their own communities. Many of the community teams have lead walking audits in their own communities since the Institute.

Six new communities are being recruited for 2014. For more information please contact : Cathy Costakis at [Costakis@montana.edu](mailto:Costakis@montana.edu) or 406-994-5734.



# NRHA Conference Calendar

## December 3-5, 2013

Rural Multiracial & Multicultural Health  
Conference  
San Antonio, TX

## February 4-6, 2014

Rural Health Policy Institute  
Washington, DC

## April 22-25, 2014

37th Annual Rural Health Conference  
Las Vegas, NV

## July 15-16, 2014

Rural Medical Educators Conference  
Atlanta, GA

## July 16-18, 2014

Rural Quality and Clinical Conference  
Atlanta, GA



Improving the Health of 62 Million Rural Americans  
[www.RuralHealthWeb.org](http://www.RuralHealthWeb.org)



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