

MONTANA OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH & AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER

WHO ARE WE?

The Montana Office of Rural Health (MORH) and Area Health Education Center (AHEC) are two federal-state partnership grant programs whose mission is to support efforts and **improve healthcare across Montana** through public/private partnerships and initiatives in rural health development. Programmatic activities include workforce development, pipeline programs, and technical assistance programs. These statewide programs are delivered through the Program Office based at the Mark & Robyn Jones College of Nursing at Montana State University in Bozeman, and five (5) regional AHEC centers: Eastern (Billings), North Eastern (Miles City), Western (Missoula), and North and South Central (Helena).

2025 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COLLEGIATE PROGRAMS

Preparing the next generation of healthcare leaders to serve rural Montana.

- 467** Montana health professions students of all levels trained through AHEC Scholars Program
- 31** Students from rural MT funded to pursue education to become a Nurse Practitioner (DNP)
- 154** Rural clinical sites served by nursing students (BSN & DNP) through clinical rotations
- 1020** Health screenings provided to children in Head Start programs across the state
- 50K** Rural clinical travel miles supported for nursing students
- 95%** of our program graduates left **confident** in their ability to practice in a rural or underserved setting

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING & TRAINING

Equipping communities to enhance their health by improving access to care, addressing social determinants of health, and strengthening the healthcare workforce.

- 30** New Community Health Workers trained
- 23** Health paraprofessionals received upskill training
- 1575** People trained in our Caring for Indigenous Montanans program
- 7261** Native Montanans in communities impacted by new chronic disease prevention policies through REACH program in partnership with DPHHS
- 96** Stakeholders engaged in the AmeriCorps planning grant process, resulting in Community Health Corps Montana launching **January 2026**

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Providing training and scholarship opportunities to enhance Montana's behavioral health workforce and expand access to mental health services across rural and underserved communities.

- 15** Paraprofessionals trained to work with youth and families impacted by OUD & SUD
- 176** Behavioral health paraprofessionals trained
- 60** Scholarships awarded to students for attendance at behavioral health trainings

PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE SUPPORT

Elevating the skills of Montana's current nursing workforce and filling specialty care gaps

- 210** Nurses who completed nurse preceptor trainings through MT AHEC and the Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence
- 123** Nurses engaged in Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) training - 53% of Montana's counties do not have a SANE nurse

HEALTHCARE FACILITY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Supporting rural and frontier communities in building healthcare delivery systems through the collection and dissemination of information, technical assistance, and coordination of statewide rural population health interests.

- 16** Critical Access Hospitals supported in Community Health Needs Assessment process
- 1646** Community surveys completed. 30 key informant interviews and 12 focus groups conducted.
- 55** People joined listening sessions for senior & long-term care assessment with Tribal communities in MT
- 210** Rural Health Clinic Network participants received education on topics such as Chronic Care Management and Billing and Coding

Facilitated nearly **\$600k** in Small Rural Hospital Improvement (SHIP) grant funding to **44 Critical Access Hospitals** to support investments in value-based care

SCAN ME



CONTACT INFORMATION

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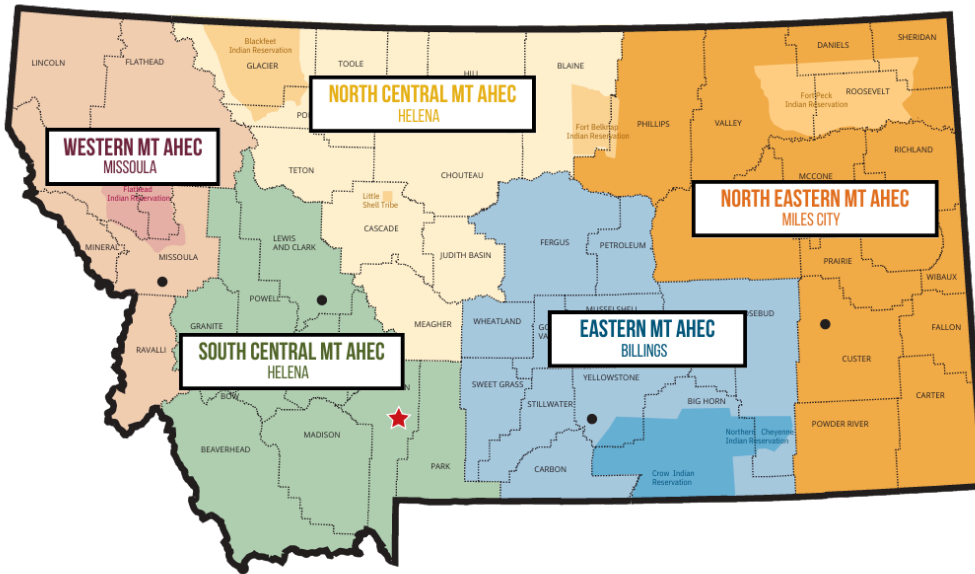
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MONTANA AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



MAP OF MONTANA AHEC REGIONS



LEARN MORE ABOUT
MONTANA AHEC
REGIONS

PIPELINE & PATHWAYS PROGRAMS

Region-based healthcare career exploration camps for high school students designed to develop the next generation of healthcare professionals.

- 198** Students participated in 1-day REACH camps
- 111** Students participated in 5-day MedStart camps
- 17** Students participated in Heads Up camp (Behavioral Health)
- 57** Students participated in Pathways to Smiles (Oral Health)

WESTERN MT AHEC

Based in Missoula at the University of Montana

- 9** Health professions graduate students supported in traveling to rural/underserved clinical sites
- 61** Behavioral health students trained through HRSA BHWET grant since 2022
- 10** Podcast episodes of *All Things Vagus* released - focused on well-being for health professionals

Friday Medical Conference interprofessional continuing education series averages **33** live attendees and **28** recorded attendees per weekly session.

NORTH CENTRAL & SOUTH CENTRAL MT AHECS

Based in Helena at the Montana Hospital Association

- 73** Participants that completed healthcare simulation education training
- 8** Housing arrangements secured for visiting UW Dental Students completing rotations in MT
- 85** CNA students receiving online didactic training
- 875** Participants between the ages of 14 and 21 that completed health career exploration and/or health career training utilizing virtual reality

EASTERN MT AHEC

Based in Billings at RiverStone Health

- 53** Health professionals receiving continuing education on X-Ray techniques
- 138** 3rd & 4th year medical students placed in clinical rotations in the Billings area
- 58** Student rotations at RiverStone Health for nursing, dental, PAs, pharmacy, MAs, and more

Expanding Heads Up Camp in 2026 to include **Teen Mental Health First Aid** training, giving high school students practical tools to support their peers' mental well-being.

NORTH EASTERN MT AHEC

Based in Miles City at the Montana Health Network

- 231** New certified nursing assistants (CNAs) trained through hosting **12** courses
- 2218** CPR and First Aid course participants throughout the state
- 29** Health professionals trained on Comprehensive Advanced Life Support (CALS)

Partnered with local high school career exploration programs at **26** high schools to train **169** high school students as CNAs, filling a local healthcare workforce need while exposing the students to healthcare careers.