



**POSITION STATEMENT OF
MONTANA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
ON
ADDRESSING MEDICAL EDUCATION AND PRIMARY CARE WORKFORCE SHORTAGE**

**ADOPTED FEBRUARY 26, 2016 BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ADOPTED MARCH 12, 2016 BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

MHA/MMA Joint Statement

Addressing Medical Education and Primary Care Workforce Shortage

The Montana Hospital Association (MHA) and Montana Medical Association (MMA) jointly recognize the challenge of recruiting and retaining a qualified health care workforce in rural Montana. It is imperative that the state address the shortage of primary care physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and other necessary providers with feasible solutions that integrate quality education and training strategies to ensure the sustainability of our health care system. Investments in Montana's medical infrastructure are investments in the state's health and economy. MHA and MMA's corollary strategies are based on the following factors:

1. Improved access to medical education in Montana.

MHA and MMA have sought expansion of opportunity for medical education at all levels of training, and for a broad spectrum of health care professionals. Priority must be given to proven pathways of education that maximize the establishment and maintenance of rural practice.

2. Continued development of primary care residency programs.

Existing programs in Montana have demonstrated success in the retention of graduates specializing in family medicine, general medicine, pediatrics and other disciplines. Further development of residency training will help to ensure a continued supply of skilled clinicians.

3. Ongoing participation in WWAMI and current residency programs.

These programs meet members' goals of improving local access to quality, affordable and effective health care. The associations will continue to work to secure federal and state policies that enhance Montana's population health without jeopardizing these successful programs.

MHA and MMA are committed to advancing research and analysis of all workforce components, including the establishment of new medical school opportunities in the region. A new school or campus would increase Montana students' access to medical education and, if located within Montana, provide a boost to the local economy. However, maintaining sufficient undergraduate and post-graduate medical training is crucial to producing rural practitioners, and it is necessary to consider the impact of increasing the number of medical students within the current infrastructure.

MHA and MMA support collaboration on the state's long-term health care needs that includes lawmakers, the medical and business communities, educators and Montana citizens. Ongoing data collection and discussions of these important matters will be necessary to identify the most effective medical education and workforce solutions.