



**POSITION STATEMENT OF  
MONTANA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
ON  
HEALTH SYSTEM REFORM  
ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 12, 2009**

The members of the Montana Medical Association want to assure our patients that we share their concerns about many aspects of health system reform. For many people the system is now broken and is not sustainable. There should be health care for all citizens. The health care system should be quality-based and patient-centered.

Montana Medical Association physicians believe that insurance should be affordable, accessible, and portable. The doctor-patient relationship should stay strong. We believe that insurance should provide a basic benefit package based on best medical evidence. Patients should not be denied coverage based on pre-existing conditions.

Physicians of the Montana Medical Association are committed to excellent patient care. We agree with the need to reduce waste as well as to provide incentives for quality improvement, prevention, and wellness. Legislative reform must emphasize the recruitment, training, and support of primary care physicians. We recognize a critical need for tort reform to help reduce unnecessary costs and continue excellent patient care.

We strongly encourage our patients to empower themselves. Significant incentives should be provided toward healthy behavior. Patients benefit from education and better health choices. More personal responsibility will increase the health of our country's citizens. Ultimately, patients have responsibility for deciding on and paying for their care.

We urge our legislators to keep the following goals in mind:

- Physicians and patients should be the ones to make individual health care decisions;
- Americans deserve to choose their physicians;
- Emphasize recruitment, training, and support of primary care physicians;
- Enact insurance market reforms that expand choice and eliminate exclusions for pre-existing conditions;
- Streamline insurance claim forms and procedures;
- Enact tort reform to reduce the cost of defensive medicine;
- Provide market-based incentives for quality improvement in the provision of care;
- Invest in Health Information Technology to improve quality and safety for patients; and,
- Provide universal coverage to all Americans.

It is important that reforms provide affordable, high-quality care while reducing unnecessary costs. We recognize that the problems in our system are entrenched. It is going to require the combined efforts of physicians and patients to get meaningful change. Remember, we all have the power of the vote.

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