



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | January 17, 2017

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**Montana Healthcare Foundation announces \$5 million in new grant opportunities to address key health challenges across the state**

*Bozeman, Mont.* – The Montana Healthcare Foundation (MHCF) today announced its 2017 call for grant proposals to address the state's most pressing health problems. This year MHCF expects to issue more than \$5 million in grants through this call for proposals and other new initiatives. Areas of focus include American Indian Health, Behavioral Health (including mental illness and substance use disorders) and Partnerships for Better Health. Information on application deadlines and how to apply can be found on the Foundation's website: [www.mthcf.org](http://www.mthcf.org).

"These grants will help address key challenges including mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction, American Indian health, and meeting the health needs of rural communities," said MHCF CEO Dr. Aaron Wernham. "The Foundation's resources will support innovation and Montana-based solutions to some of our most difficult health problems."

Grants under this call for proposals will focus on three areas identified by stakeholders as leading health challenges in the state:

1. **American Indian Health:** American Indians in Montana face many health challenges, including historical underfunding of healthcare and higher rates of many illnesses, injuries, and suicide. To address these challenges, MHCF works directly with tribes, tribal health programs, and urban Indian health centers to develop long-term, effective solutions.
2. **Behavioral Health:** Mental illness and substance use disorders are common, serious problems in Montana, complicated by the shortage of treatment availability throughout the state. By one estimate, 93 percent of Montanans who have a substance use disorder are not receiving treatment. This focus area will support collaborative, systems-based solutions to behavioral health challenges in Montana. Specific initiatives include supporting organizations seeking to integrated medical and behavioral health services, and strengthening the substance use disorder prevention and treatment system.
3. **Partnerships for Better Health:** Many communities, particularly in rural Montana, have limited access to certain health services, and health workforce shortages and budget shortfalls are widespread. Projects funded under this focus area will create new inter-agency partnerships designed to deliver more accessible and effective care; expand the use of care coordination; and strengthen efforts to prevent disease through addressing upstream risk factors such as poverty and poor-quality housing.

## **How to Apply for Funding**

MHCF is offering two grant opportunities under this call for proposals:

1. **Rapid Response Grants** (\$10,000 to \$75,000 for 12-to 24-month projects) will be awarded through a one-step application process offered twice in 2017, with the possibility of a third opportunity this fall. The first deadline for proposals is February 14, 2017.
2. **Large Grants** (\$70,000 to \$150,000 for 12-to 24-month projects) will be awarded through a two-step application process offered once in 2017. The deadline for brief proposals is April 7, 2017. Only the most promising brief proposals will be invited to submit full proposals.

For those interested in these grant opportunities, MHCF will be hosting webinars and conference calls to provide more information on focus areas and the application process. Please visit the Foundation's website at [www.mthcf.org](http://www.mthcf.org) to register and to learn more about grant eligibility and important dates and deadlines.

## **About the Montana Healthcare Foundation**

MHCF was created in 2013, and makes strategic investments to improve the health and healthcare of Montanans. MHCF was formed as the result of the sale of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana to a private corporation. In accordance with State law, the assets were transferred to a charitable trust to be managed for public benefit. Currently, MHCF has more than \$130 million in assets. The Foundation is a permanent resource for Montanans; and will spend the income from trust investments (estimated at roughly five percent of the total value of the trust each year) on grant disbursements and related programs and expenses, providing a stable, reliable resource supporting health for Montanans.

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