

MAAG Meeting

Wednesday, October 22, 2025
10:00am – 11:30am
Location: Virtual

Welcome & Introductions

BJ welcomed attendees to the third and final MAAG meeting of 2025. Attendees introduced themselves with a Halloween-themed icebreaker. Attendees included representatives from Montana DPHHS, Mountain Pacific Quality Health, Montana Hospital Association, local public health programs, American Academy of Pediatrics, Montana Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate, AstraZeneca, and GSK.

MACP Program Report

General Program Updates

- **CDC funding for FY25–26 confirmed at level funding; activities will continue as planned.**
- Stock Albuterol: [Montana's HB 600](#) implementation underway; Implementation Guide and FAQs finalized; model policy in development with Montana School Boards Association; mini-grants available. The **Guide to Stock Albuterol in Montana Schools** is completed and on the school health website, dphhs.mt.gov/schoolhealth/chronichealth/asthma.

Next steps for the MACP include:

- Developing Model Policy w/ Montana School Boards Association
 - Updating the Creating Asthma Friendly Schools Training
 - Currently the Montana Teacher Learning HUB is undergoing a platform changeover, so we are in holding pattern until this change takes place. MACP will be using this time to improve upon the now long-standing Creating Asthma Friendly Schools training.
 - A new School Health Mini-Grant project option is available to support schools in standing up stock albuterol- dphhs.mt.gov/schoolhealth/grants
- **Big Sky Pulmonary Conference- March 5-6, 2026: [Registration open](#)**
 - **Excellence in Pulmonary Care** award announced.
The Excellence in Pulmonary Care award honors individuals who have demonstrated outstanding commitment, innovation, and impact in the field of pulmonary health. This award recognizes excellence across all areas of pulmonary health and is open to professionals working in both clinical and non-clinical roles.

Eligible nominees may include, but are not limited to, organizations, groups, physicians, nurses, clinical support staff, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, researchers, educators, public health professionals, or anyone who contributes to advancing pulmonary care and improving the quality of life for individuals living with pulmonary conditions.

Nominees should demonstrate leadership, compassion, and a commitment to improving outcomes in pulmonary health for individuals and communities in Montana. The award highlights those who go above and beyond in their role and serve as an inspiration to others working in the pulmonary field.

- MACP presented an EPA webinar on wildfire smoke and asthma on August 13, 2025 titled, *Breathing Easier Protecting Kids with Asthma from Wildfire Smoke*. The full webinar can be found here, <http://www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org/webinars/breathing-easier-protecting-kids-asthma-wildfire-smoke>.

EPA's Best Practices Guide for Indoor Air Quality assessments.epa.gov/risk/document/&deid%3D365813

A resource shared prior to and during the EPA webinar was the recently released, Best Practices Guide for Improving Indoor Air Quality in Commercial Public Buildings During Wildland Fire Smoke Events. The plain language document was created to help communities identify strategies for reducing smoke exposure indoors during wildland fire smoke events. It's targeted towards individuals and groups with decision-making abilities for public, commercial, and multi-unit residential buildings including building owners and managers, school administrators, and facility managers; (2) federal, state, local, and Tribal environmental and public health organizations that provide information to communities to reduce exposure to wildland fire smoke in public or commercial spaces.

- The MACP will be presenting at the [Maine Indoor Air Quality and Energy Conference](#) on the work related to wildfire smoke and air quality in Montana.
- The Child Care Provider Training is in its final revision stage and the MACP anticipates the new course will be opened in early 2026.
- Ongoing social media outreach through [Public Health in the 406](#). Anyone interested in sharing or utilizing draft social media content, the MACP is excited to share posts and draft content.

Surveillance & Evaluation Updates:

- Reports completed on Work-Related Asthma, Air Quality in Schools, and Social Determinants of Health.
 - [Work-Related Asthma](#): Higher prevalence among adults ≥45 years.
 - [Air Quality in Montana Schools](#): 99% of administrators vs. 64% of teachers rated school air as good/excellent; perception gaps noted.
 - [SDOH among Montanans with Asthma](#): 65% of Montanans with asthma had ≥1 SDOH risk; 21% had ≥4. High stress, dissatisfaction, and food insecurity most common.
 - MAP Evaluation: Virtual and in-person visits show comparable improvement. 77% of participants had ≥1 SDOH risk factor; 41% reported mold in homes. Additional analysis influences internal changes to the Asthma Home Visiting Program. An economic evaluation will be currently underway.

Clinical Quality Improvement Support

- Active sites: Sheridan Memorial Hospital, Generations Family Medicine, Helena Indian Alliance.
 - Focus areas: annual spirometry, asthma control assessments, tobacco cessation, EHR integration of SDOH Z-codes.
 - Total patients with asthma across sites impacted is over 400 asthma patients.

- New site recruitment open; funding up to \$7,000. Interested healthcare offices/clinics can sign up at dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/asthma/qualityimprovement

BJ shared about other support for clinical QI in Montana

- Montana Hospital Association Programs
 - Hospital Quality Improvement Collaborative
 - Montana Health Research & Education Foundation: Contracts, grants, and programs administered by, and funded through MHREF, to assist MHA's members in several critical areas to address emerging healthcare needs in their communities.
mtha.org/foundation/montana-health-research-education-foundation/
- American Lung Association: Asthma QI- Enhancing Care for Children with Asthma
lung.org/professional-education/health-systems-improvement/enhancing-asthma-care-program
 - No support currently available for Montana healthcare partners, but resources are still available on ALA website and future funding opportunities may come up.
- Montana Office of Rural Health: Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP)
healthinfo.montana.edu/ship/index.html

The purpose of the SHIP is to help small rural hospitals of 49 beds or less, do any or all of the following: 1) enable the purchase of equipment and/or training to help hospitals attain value-based purchasing provision in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA); 2) aid small rural hospitals in joining or becoming accountable care organizations, or create shared savings programs per the ACA; and 3) enable small rural hospitals to purchase health information technology, equipment, and/or training to comply with meaningful use, ICD-11 standards, and payment bundling.

Montana has fifty (50) Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) which meet the requirements for participation in the SHIP grant program, although not every hospital will choose to participate. Typically, each hospital is funded at \$12,000 per year per hospital. Montana is one of the largest state participants in the country, with annual funding of nearly \$600,000.

The Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP) supports eligible hospitals in meeting value-based payment and care goals for their respective organizations, through purchases of hardware, software subscription services, and training. SHIP also enables small rural hospitals: to become or join accountable care organizations (ACOs); to participate in shared savings programs; and to purchase health information technology (hardware and software) including subscriptions, equipment, and/or training to comply with quality improvement activities such as advancing patient care information, promoting interoperability, and payment bundling.

Guest Speakers:

Eric Aguirre & Zachary Motz (AstraZeneca)

- Shared Atlas database and AIRQ tools for asthma management; discussed OCS risk and MIPS alignment for AIRQ starting 2026.
- AIRQ:
 - In terms of Electronic Health Records incorporating AIRQ- EPIC has a community share platform, so if there's other institutions that have already built it in, you can get on that community share platform and just easily integrate it into your clinics.
- See slides for additional details

Patricia Kosednar (Mountain Pacific Quality Health)

- Reviewed MPQH quality improvement resources and toolkits, microlearning videos, and technical assistance options.
- MPQH Health Quality Resources- mpqhf.org/resources/health-quality-resources/
 - Parter Spotlight Series showcasing innovative approaches from health systems and partners
 - On Demand Training & Education Learning Series:
 - Quality Improvement Basics
 - Health Information Tech. Basics
 - Team-Based Care Basics
 - Health Boost: On-Demand Micro Training Videos
 - Increasing Access to Care
 - ECQI Templates and Toolkits

Wildfire Season Recap (Mary Anderson)

Provided a 2025 wildfire season overview, clean indoor air center progress, and updates to public health smoke response resources.

- 6 Clean Air Centers piloted in the 2025 wildfire season
 - Targeted places that everyone could go or that vulnerable populations were already using.
 - Sites used information from indoor air quality monitors and reminders from DPHHS and local project partners to inform action steps and protect IAQ.
 - The one school site was reluctant to run air cleaners are limit the number of exterior doors that would be used. This led to the school having the worst indoor air quality out of all the sites.
 - Some sites held educational sessions on how to make box fan filters and made other educational materials available and received very positive engagement and feedback from the community.
- Public Health Response Wildfire Smoke Event Template
 - Intended to be an addendum to community wildfire response plans with a focus on vulnerable populations.
 - Public Health Emergency Preparedness partners have been involved in developing this template and will play a key role in helping counties incorporate this planning template.
 - If partners are interested in having their local county health department and emergency preparedness teams adopt a wildfire smoke response plan, Mary and DPHHS Public Health Emergency Preparedness will be offering seminars and table top training exercises in 2026. Contact Mary at mary.anderson2@mt.gov.