

IN THIS ISSUE

- Incoming TRUST scholars
- AIME
- New TRUST & RUOP Sites
- Awards & Advocacy
- Residency Match
- TRUST Leadership Retreat
- Stern Corner



Dried traditional herbs and medicines set out by Darnell Rides At The Door, respected Pikunii (Blackfeet) woman from the Buffalo Chip band.

American Indian Medical Experience

The American Indian Medical Experience (AIME) is a three-day immersive training program for entering students. The incoming class is separated into two groups, one group spends time with the Blackfeet in Browning and the other with the Crow and Northern Cheyenne in Hardin. Activities include meeting with tribal elders to learn about Native healing practices of the Sun Dance and sweat lodges, and the use of traditional medicines from herbs, teas, plants to grasses. Such engagement creates connections and provides opportunity for richer cultural awareness and respect, which can help reduce bias and inequity in care.

AIME also provides better understanding of the health disparities Native communities face. By meeting with organizations such as FAST Blackfeet in Browning and Mountain Shadow Association in Hardin, and hearing from dedicated physicians such as Dr. Joe Gray, CMO and clinician at the Blackfeet Community Hospital in Browning, students better understand the many factors that influence health for Indigenous populations. Engaging students in American Indian culture is key to increasing physician access and health outcomes in these communities. Montana WWAMI is dedicated to creating a workforce to serve these patient populations throughout the WWAMI region.

Students with an interest in a future career serving American Indian communities can augment their training through the UWSOM's Indian Health Pathway.

Welcoming Students to Montana TRUST

Montana WWAMI welcomes 12 Montana students to the TRUST program. Their hometowns are Belfry, Billings, Bozeman, Box Elder, Cascade, Helena, Park City, Philipsburg, Plentywood, Red Lodge, and White Sulphur Springs. These new TRUST students spent time over the summer getting to know their communities and the medical teams. Over their medical school careers, these students will periodically circle back to these sites including during foundations phase, for RUOP, and then to complete WRITE during their patient care phase.

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FACULTY AWARDS

Frank Newman Rural Health Award – Rural Clinician Leadership, 2023



Dr. Gallo has served as the lead clinical faculty in Miles City for the Montana WWAMI Targeted Rural Underserved Track (TRUST) program for almost 15 years. During that time, she has grown Miles City into a robust rural medical education training site for Montana WWAMI. We thank her for her efforts!

Dr. Sue Gallo, M.D., UWSOM Clinical Associate Professor, Dept. FM, Billings Clinic, Miles City

Richard M. Tucker Award

Excellence in Teaching Award - Academic Year 2023-2024
UW Medical students nominate educators from the WWAMI region and based on those nominations the UWSOM selection committee selects honorees who have demonstrated true enthusiasm and outstanding dedication in providing teaching and mentoring to our students. We thank the following Richard M. Tucker Award winners for their dedication and passion for the art of teaching.



Michael Caldwell, M.D., UWSOM Clinical Associate Professor, Providence Internal Medicine, Missoula



Nate Cook, M.D., UWSOM Clinical Instructor, Community Hospital of Anaconda

ADVOCACY



Montana TRUST students Chelsea Koessel, Olivia Reid, Erin Calkins, and Allie Stevens attended the National Rural Health Association Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. last February (shown here with WWAMI Clinical Dean, Jay Erickson). A key focus of TRUST is to educate, encourage, and support students to deepen their understanding and abilities as healthcare advocates, particularly around rural health. The NRHA provides the opportunity for students to explore and engage in healthcare advocacy.

BioRegions International Last summer, a group of Montana WWAMI medical students embarked on an international health project 6,000 miles from home. E-23 TRUST students, Chelsea Koessel and McKay Guckenberger, and attending physicians Daniel Cornish (Dillon TRUST alum) and Joel Ross (PGY3 MFMR) spent a month in Northern Mongolia, joined by peers from the Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences (MNUMS), which included four Mongolian providers and two Mongolian medical students. Their united goal, to enhance patient care in rural communities. BioRegions facilitates this exchange program to encourage mutual learning through projects that improve the environment, society, economy, and infrastructure.

Traveling across northern Mongolian provinces, the team set up clinics in Khövsgöl and Bulgan where locals, many of them nomadic herders, could access medical care. Chelsea and McKay worked alongside the physicians and the Mongolian translators to interview patients, conduct physical exams, and discuss assessments and plans. For Chelsea, training in Mongolia gave her insight into the kind of physician she wants to be. She stated: *Understanding other cultures and beliefs helps me become a better provider. Empathy and patience are a huge part of providing medicine, and meeting people like the Mongolian providers has helped mold me into the type of provider I hope to be.*



STUDENT AWARDS

Montana Medical Association, Medical Student Awards – Future Physicians of Montana



Award recipients Montana TRUST students, Trey Dschaak (E-21 Mile City) and Lindsey Riley (E-21 Hardin).

George Saari Award

Presented to Nick Johnson (E-20 TRUST alum, Hamilton site) at the 2024 White Coat Ceremony, the Saari award honors students who exemplify the professionalism and humanitarian characteristics as exemplified by the late Dr. George Saari.



Nick Johnson



Benjamin Nalls

Montana State University's Pure Gold Award

The Pure Gold program provides an opportunity to recognize Montana State University faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends for their contributions to the university. Award received January 2024. Nominated by Kale Pickett.

Hailing from Stevensville, Ben grew up working on his family's farm where he learned the importance of hard work and determination. After graduating high school, Ben served in the U.S. Marine Corps. His true character was illustrated when he selflessly risked his life to rescue his sergeant from drowning, this just after Ben himself had nearly drowned. His actions earned him Navy and Marine Corps medals and distinction among his superiors and peers. After completing his service in the Marine Corps, Ben attended the University of Montana where he excelled in pre-nursing coursework followed by nursing school in Billings. He was accepted into Montana WWAMI in 2022. Ben consistently exemplifies the values of Montana State University. His drive for excellence, integrity and curiosity are unparalleled and we should feel immensely grateful that he has devoted his life to serving others.

Alpha Omega Alpha

TRUST Scholars, Marlow Schulz (E-21, Ronan/Polson site) and Paul Wilson (E-21, Hamilton site) were elected into the UWSOM chapter of AOA. Students are selected using a process that incorporates clerkship grades, and feedback from peers, college mentors and clerkship directors, in addition to lived experience statements and information about service and scholarly efforts. The top 25 percent of the class is eligible to be considered for AOA.



Marlow Schulz



Paul Wilson

Student Leadership Retreat

In late June, Montana WWAMI faculty, staff, and students gathered at the picturesque Homestake Lodge just outside of Butte, for the annual Montana TRUST Student Leadership Retreat. Being part of TRUST allows for an enhanced and engaged curriculum covering areas of leadership and rural health awareness. This year's schedule included legislative advocacy and engagement as well as vertical career advising with recent "local" residents and MS4s.



RUOP

Summer participation in the Rural and Underserved Opportunities Program (RUOP) had 29 WWAMI students (13 of them from the entering 2023 Montana class) placed for four-week stays in rural or underserved RUOP sites throughout the state, working with 67 volunteer physician mentors. Most of the students participating in RUOP combine their experience with the III (Independent Investigative Inquiry) community project. This is a wonderful opportunity for both the students and the communities.

We welcome two new RUOP sites: Dr. Carlee Kalbfleisch in Darby and Dr. Jacob Whetzel in Superior will begin hosting students in 2025.



Brittney Tierney, E-23 and Kaylee Stein E-22 in Hamilton for RUOP and WRITE sessions, summer 2024

WRITE (WWAMI Rural Integrated

Training Experience) In the patient care phase, TRUST students head to their sites for their 21- or 24-week clinical education experience (sites with OB/Gyn faculty allow for 24-week sessions). Throughout the WRITE clerkship, students experience a broad range of medical, pediatric, obstetric-gynecologic, and psychiatric problems. Emphasis is on the rural physician's roles and responsibilities to diagnose, treat, and manage most health problems on a longitudinal continuing basis while calling upon the health care resources of the community.



Haley Rogers (E-22) with Myles City WRITE Preceptor Kay Cee Gardner (on the left) after a 5 a.m. delivery of C-section twins.

NEW TRUST SITES

PureView Health in Helena and Clark Fork Valley Hospital in Plains are our newest TRUST sites, joining our other 11 rural/underserved training communities: Anaconda, Butte, Dillon, Glasgow, Hamilton, Hardin, Lewistown, Libby, Livingston, Miles City and Ronan/Polson. Madeline Turner, MD (MT WWAMI Alum E-07 and Missoula Tracker), and Jessica Valentine, MD, are serving as the lead faculty in those communities. Both sites have been hosting RUOP students for years. We are excited for the rich learning opportunities these communities will offer the TRUST scholars.



*Lead faculty in Helena:
Madeline Turner, M.D.,
UWSOM Clinical Instructor, FM*



*Lead faculty in Plains:
Jessica Valentine, UWSOM
Clinical Assistant Professor, FM*

ANNUAL RESIDENCY MATCH

Medical students across the nation celebrated Match Day on Friday, March 15, 2024. Of the 31 Montana WWAMI medical students who matched, fifteen will go into primary care, three of whom will remain in Montana for residency. Out of the full Montana class, 13 were TRUST scholars, six of whom matched into primary care.



Graduating Montana TRUST Scholars – Megan Branson and Nathaniel Sisson.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Save the date – Annual TRUST Faculty Forum and Montana WWAMI Faculty Development Conference: April 4-6, 2025 – At Fairmont Hot Springs Resort in Anaconda. We hope to see you there!

MONTANA HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE

In September, Dr. Jay Erickson and team presented on Creating a Rural Physician Workforce for Montana: *The Montana WWAMI TRUST Program* at the annual MHA Montana Healthcare Conference in Billings.

Team: Courtney Honken, MD, R2, MFMR (Libby TRUST alum), Kay Cee Gardner, MD, Billings Clinic Miles City (Lewistown TRUST alum), Jay Erickson, MD, Alex Wickens (E-23, Miles City TRUST), Tessa Sawyer (E-21, Dillon TRUST)

STERN CORNER – WWAMI Faculty Development Opportunities

Montana Stern Regional Faculty Educator (UWSOM), Dr. Laura Goodell invites you to engage with her and fellow teaching physicians to access medical education faculty development sessions (many with CME). Sessions range from live and in-person to live via Zoom to asynchronous learning. Questions? Ideas? Contact her at imgood@uw.edu Or visit <https://www.montana.edu/wwami/montanawwamifacultydevelopment.html>

General Teaching Resources at the Center for Learning and Innovation in Medical Education: CLIME - An Accessible Platform to Help Faculty Develop Their Teaching Skills - <https://clime.washington.edu/teaching-resources/>

WWAMI ALUM

Calling Montana WWAMI Alum: We want to share your stories!

Highlighting the history of Montana WWAMI and its impact through the amazing stories and memories you carry. As an alum, let us know if we can feature you in Montana WWAMI social media channels and/or newsletters. Scan the QR code with your phone to submit your stories!



UWSOM MONTANA WWAMI ADMINISTRATION

Foundations Phase

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