

Physician Retention in Rural Areas: A Qualitative Look

Despite nationwide and state efforts, shortages of physicians in rural Montana remain high, with the problem especially apparent among Native American populations. Unlike several other states, Montana has no current medical school to specifically address internal medicine physician shortages in rural areas. Additionally, only one internal medicine residency program exists in Montana at Billings Clinic, and this program is in its infancy.

Purpose

This qualitative research study seeks to investigate internal medicine physician and recruitment in rural and remote areas of Montana and Northern Wyoming. The goal of this study is to understand the “lived experience” of those internal medical physicians practicing in these rural areas and examine their reasons for recruitment and retention. Understanding their experiences may inform internal medicine programs and rural communities how to best recruit and retain internal medicine physicians.

This study has been approved by the IRB of Billings. Funding is provided by the Helmsley Charitable Trust.

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