



January 8, 2021

Senator Jon Tester  
**Washington, DC Office**  
311 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-2604

Dear Senator Tester:

I hope this finds you safe and well. As you know, MNA is the recognized leader and advocate for the professional nurse in Montana. MNA promotes professional nursing practice, standards, and education; represents professional nurses; and provides nursing leadership in promoting high quality healthcare.

Nurses represent the largest group of health care providers whose services are directly linked to quality and cost-effectiveness. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) employment projections for 2012-2022, the employment of Registered Nurses (RNs) is projected to grow 19% from 2012 to 2022, with job openings for RNs projected to reach more than one million by 2022.

This increased demand for RNs in the coming years will be driven by an aging population. This workforce shortage has been magnified during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Pew Research Center, an estimated 10,000 people each day are turning 65 years old, a trend that will continue until 2030. The average age of a nurse today is 51 years old. Montana holds the distinction as the grayest state in the West. As such, the healthcare workforce will need to grow to keep up with demand for nursing care in traditional acute care settings and the expansion of non-hospital settings such as home care and long-term care.

Montana Nurses Association appreciates the current federal assistance to bolster the primary care workers in rural and underserved communities through Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), but our members have shared that applications for assistance far exceeds available funding.

HRSA builds healthy communities by supporting qualified healthcare providers dedicated to working in areas of the U.S. with limited access to care and by removing financial barriers to providers, allowing them to work in underserved and unserved areas like Montana. MNA asks that Montana's Congressional Delegation support increased funding through all HRSA to expand the nursing workforce in Montana. MNA will share these wishes with HHS/HRSA after January 21, 2020.

MNA believes an investment in a Montana nurse is an investment in the health of all Montanans. Please let me know if you have questions, as MNA is the trusted voice for Montana nurses.

Sincerely,

Vicky Byrd, MSN, RN  
Chief Executive Officer  
Montana Nurses Association

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