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SHARED VALUES ARE A MONTANA THING SO IS THE DELIVERY OF EFFECTIVE AND AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE.

Tim Fox is a native Montanan. He was born in a Billings hospital and was raised in the small farm and ranch town of Hardin. Tim recalls his visits to the local Hardin health clinic, and his overnight stay as a young boy with appendicitis in Hardin's critical access hospital. That critical access hospital would several years later save the life of Tim's father when he suffered a heart attack. As a cancer survivor himself, Tim appreciates the importance of affordable access to healthcare, and he refuses to play politics with the lives and health of Montanans when it comes to developing cost-effective healthcare strategies.

Over the past year, Tim has visited over thirty large urban hospitals, rural critical access hospitals, community health clinics, mental health clinics, children's hospitals, substance abuse treatment facilities, retirement homes, veteran hospitals, and other healthcare providers and facilities. In each of those visits, Tim took the time to listen to the managers, leaders, and providers who work there. Tim regularly engages with the major healthcare associations and their membership, and with everyday Montanans interested in healthcare policy, and he knows their challenges, issues, and concerns.

Healthcare is a complex issue anywhere, but especially in a large, diverse, and rural state like Montana. As Montanans, we demand access to affordable healthcare when and where we need it, whether we live in Sidney, Billings, Missoula, Eureka, or anywhere in-between. One-size-fits-all policies simply do not work, we have seen proof of that with the unsustainable policies in healthcare imposed on Montana by the federal government. Tim Fox has surrounded himself with advisors, policy experts, and supporters who utilize bold, and innovative ideas to change how Montana delivers healthcare with a focus on providing care in a way that is affordable, effective, and sustainable.

Healthcare is not just about physicians and hospitals, but also includes mental health, developmental disabilities, and aging populations, to name a few. Each segment of Montana healthcare exists to serve those in need using the most effective and efficient practices available. However, these same segments exist, in many cases, in a competitive environment for the resources and funding that can be provided by a finite state budget. Without common goals for healthcare delivery, the competition for legislative or financial resources has the tendency to force administrations and legislators to make the delivery of healthcare political, rather than effective and efficient. In the past, lacking adequate leadership, it should come as no surprise that many candidates for office either choose healthcare policy and decisions based upon political rhetoric or simply to avoid the healthcare conversation altogether.

Bold and innovative ideas will come from listening and working with those who deliver healthcare in Montana. The government should not tell these stakeholders how it has been done in the past. To foster more effective and efficient healthcare delivery, the Fox administration will work with the various healthcare providers and patients to identify common goals and best strategies forward for Montanans in areas where providers are in competition for resources. The Tim Fox for Governor team includes some of the best healthcare policy minds in Montana, and together, with the help of many Montanans, we will design a better values-based healthcare system for our state. This effort will include the use of both government and private entity resources, ensuring that healthcare delivery in Montana is not only effective but is affordable for all Montanans.

Tim Fox is not afraid to take on the complex issues in healthcare. He understands that the status quo is not good enough. Tim understands that complex changes may be coming from the federal government. These changes will likely give states more control with regards to how we deliver healthcare in Montana. With a team of policy experts at his disposal, and by listening to those that deliver healthcare in Montana, and to those who receive healthcare, the Fox administration will provide for Montanans the most effective and affordable healthcare possible.



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TIM FOX'S COMMITMENT TO MONTANA:

As Governor, Tim Fox commits to leading in lowering costs, maintaining access, and promoting innovation that benefits patients.

-  Lower the cost of healthcare
-  Change the system to provide sustainable care to Montana's most needy
-  Protect those with Pre-existing Conditions
-  Empower a Reliable Workforce
-  Promote Access for Rural Montana
-  Promote Innovation & Research
-  Promote Regional Focus
-  Bring a Medical School to Montana
-  Physicians
-  Nurses
-  Developmentally disabled
-  Mental Health
-  Assisted Living
-  Aging Populations/Nursing Homes
-  Alzheimer's/Memory Care
-  Native American Health
-  Rural Air Ambulance Services
-  Hospitals
-  Insurers

**PRINCIPLED. MONTANAN.
CONSERVATIVE.**

The cost of healthcare is crippling to the Montana family and stifling small business growth. My main priority is to lower costs.

A white handwritten signature of "Tim Fox" on a dark red background.





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LOWER THE COST OF HEALTHCARE

Prioritizing Lower Costs

"The cost of healthcare is crippling to the Montana family and stifling small business growth," Tim Fox said a recent townhall. "My main priority is to lower costs."

- **Prescription Drugs** – As attorney general, Tim has vigorously enforced Montana's consumer protection laws against pharmaceutical companies that engaged in price-gouging, or that marketed drugs "off label" for uses that were not approved by the FDA, or that misled providers and patients as to the dangers associated with certain prescription drugs. These legal actions have resulted in tens of millions of dollars in penalties paid by the drug companies going back to Montana taxpayers.¹ Tim will continue his fight to lower prescription drug costs and bind pharmaceutical companies to comply with Montana law.
- **Promote Value-Based Care** – As attorney general, Tim has worked closely with many Montana healthcare professionals, industry associations and non-profits to address opioid abuse, the substance abuse crisis, mental health issues, substance abuse intervention programs, price transparency, Medicaid fraud, health screening education and awareness, workforce development, ending sexual violence, stopping human trafficking, and increasing healthcare education opportunities in Montana. Tim will continue to work with these organizations to promote value-based care.
- **Implement cost-saving patient-centered, data-driven healthcare reforms** – Reforms levied upon the healthcare community must be data-driven and centered on the safety and care of the patient. These data-driven reforms, together with the elimination of unnecessary regulation that does not promote patient safety and care, will help to make healthcare delivery more efficient and affordable for our citizens.
- **Reduce unnecessary and costly administrative burdens** – Too often, the government implements unnecessary administrative burdens on the healthcare industry that do nothing to improve patient safety or care. The costs of these unnecessary administrative burdens are then passed on to the patient. Tim knows that reducing unnecessary administrative burdens will lower the cost of healthcare, and he has worked with several stakeholders to identify which regulations are the costliest and should be eliminated.
- **Eliminate unnecessary and costly government regulation** – Tim will work with Montana stakeholders to identify and repeal unnecessary regulations that do not contribute to patient safety or care needs.
- **Eliminating the practice of allowing surprise healthcare bills** – Healthcare consumers already have a hard time paying for healthcare services, without having to pay for out-of-network charges that were not disclosed at the time of service. Tim is committed to working with healthcare providers to ensure that our citizens are not subjected to surprise healthcare bills that were not disclosed at the time of service.



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CHANGE THE SYSTEM

Provide Sustainable Care to Montana's Most Needy

The Affordable Care Act and Medicaid Expansion are unaffordable long term and will need to be repealed and replaced at the federal level. Montana needs to be well-positioned to implement new healthcare policy for low-income Montanans under the new federal guidelines. There are Montanans that will not have any access to healthcare, preventative and critical, without help. Tim is committed to providing care to Montana's most needy in a way that is affordable, responsible, and sustainable.

PROTECT THOSE WITH PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

No Montana family should be denied access to healthcare

Tim is currently appearing in federal court to fight for Montanans' ability to retain insurance coverage for pre-existing conditions.² No Montana family should be denied access to healthcare based upon a pre-existing condition.

EMPOWER A RELIABLE WORKFORCE

Finding employees is a major issue

In every healthcare setting across the state, finding employees is a major issue. Tim is committed to working with businesses, industries, and educational institutions to ensure that our workforce is well trained and available for our healthcare industries. He recently launched WorkForceMT, a comprehensive plan to connect Montana students to Montana healthcare jobs. Please read the full workforce development strategy here: www.foxforgovernor.com/workforce-strategy-paper

Tim selected Jon Knokey as his running mate in part because of Jon's leadership in working with legislators and the Governor to get 3,000 in-home healthcare workers a wage increase that will directly save the state millions of dollars. These workers provide services for approximately 5,800 Montanans that are legally disabled. One-third of those jobs were vacant as the pay was too low, and nearly 50 percent of the state's direct-care workers are eligible for costly government assistance, which costs the State more in the long run.³ "This is an economic issue and budget issue," Knokey said, "You're either paying less now, through increased wages or much more through government support. This was a smart investment to ensure the disabled and elderly had a workforce to provide them services, and it costs the state less money in the long-run."

2 (2019, December). Montana Department of Justice <https://dojmt.gov/fox-on-affordable-care-act-ruling-the-rule-of-law-prevailed/>

3 Monares, F. (2018, August). Montana's in-home health care workers likely getting raises. The Bozeman Daily Chronicle. https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/politics/montana-s-in-home-health-care-workers-likely-getting-raises/article_079991f0-d02c-512d-9b23-7841491bf010.html



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PROMOTE ACCESS FOR RURAL MONTANA

Ensure our frontier state citizens have access to healthcare

Tim has met with nearly every critical access care facility in rural areas of the state, and their needs are diverse and dynamic, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. These hospitals need to thrive because without healthcare, you cannot have a community or a local economy. Tim commits to working with stakeholders towards a rural strategy that ensures our frontier state citizens have access to healthcare.

PROMOTE INNOVATION & RESEARCH

Evidence-driven research and analysis and addressing influences on health and illness

In 2013, when Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana sold its assets to a for-profit entity, Tim's office created a Montana Healthcare Foundation charitable trust to accept approximately \$200 million from the sale and appointed the initial board members.⁴ The strategic investments of the Montana Healthcare Foundation have greatly improved the quality and affordability of health services across Montana, with the aim of "conducting evidence-driven research and analysis and addressing the upstream influences on health and illness."⁵

PROMOTE REGIONAL FOCUS

Improve the health of Montanans living in rural Montana

Montana is a vast and diverse state. In 2015, Tim's office approved the creation of the Headwaters Foundation to accept approximately \$100 million from the proceeds of the sale of the assets of the non-profit Missoula Community Hospital to a for-profit joint venture.⁶ The Foundation's aim is to improve the health of Montanans living in Western Montana for countless generations to come.⁷ As governor, Tim commits to working with these foundations, and with other healthcare-related non-profits, to promote their effectiveness and to enhance their ability to improve the health and safety of Montanans.

BRING A MEDICAL SCHOOL TO MONTANA

Innovative ways to improve our healthcare workforce

Tim believes in education and continues to find innovative ways to improve our healthcare workforce. Too many Montanans who desire to work in the healthcare industry either cannot find education opportunities or must leave the state to get the required education. Those that leave the state often practice in the place where they were trained. Tim will work to ensure that more healthcare education can be delivered in Montana and to ensure that more Montana students can find good-paying healthcare jobs in our state.

4 Dennison, M. (2014, April). Foundation funded by sale of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana will have \$150M. Montana Standard. https://mtstandard.com/news/local/foundation-funded-by-sale-of-blue-cross-and-blue-shield/article_b7c0141c-c836-11e3-9ff0-0019bb2963f4.html

5 Montana Healthcare Foundation. <https://mthcf.org/about/>

6 Erickson, D. (2015, December). Attorney general approves proposal for \$74M in proceeds from CMC sale. Missoulian. https://missoulian.com/news/local/attorney-general-approves-proposal-for-m-in-proceeds-from-cmc/article_4dc97b28-3d58-5ac7-8768-ef906adf945e.html

7 Headwaters Foundation. <https://www.headwatersmt.org/foundation/>



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PHYSICIANS

Students that educate and train in Montana will stay in Montana

Physicians, whether working with or independent of hospitals, are responsible for providing the majority of healthcare to Montanans. Broad areas of concern are access to appropriate and affordable care, drug affordability, workforce shortages, funding of medical student graduate education, physician wellness, implementation of the Health Information Exchange, and the reduction of unnecessary regulation and administrative burden.

Physicians often are on the opposite side of policy arguments with other parties such as Payers (Insurers). In discussion with Physicians and Payers, however, efforts are being made by both groups working together in order to resolve issues prior to involving action by the State or Legislature. It is promising that this is also happening in numerous other areas. Tim supports our industries working together to find solutions rather than waiting for the government to create solutions that often do nothing other than add administrative burdens and unnecessary costs, which are then passed on to Montana patients.

Physicians tell us that they look forward to working with a policy-led and data-driven administration, where the focus can be truly on the care and safety of the patient, and the elimination of unnecessary costs. Our focus cannot be just on the short term, but we must also look to long term benefits, including the potential expansion of covered services. Such an expansion of covered services can be shown to ultimately result in the lowering of the cost of healthcare for insured parties. Innovation and a true commitment to working with all stakeholders to deliver better and more accessible healthcare at lower costs will be the hallmark of Tim's administration.

Tim is committed to ensuring that Montana students that desire to become physicians are given every opportunity for local education and training. Student physicians that educate and train in Montana will likely stay in Montana. Tim also supports the continuation of funding for the Montana Rural Physician Incentive Program, which helps to ensure that doctors that choose to practice in rural Montana communities are able to live and prosper in those same communities, thus increasing access for our rural citizens.⁸

Limited providers and facilities in the state of Montana able to provide inpatient and outpatient mental health services is alarming. Because of this limitation, those needing mental health services are seeking care in the Emergency Rooms across Montana, which is not the most appropriate environment or cost-effective place to receive mental health services. Tim's commitment to medical education will include the training, recruitment, and retaining of mental healthcare professionals.



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NURSES

Nurses are the backbone of healthcare in Montana

Nurses are the backbone of healthcare in Montana. They are on the front line and responsible for the care of Montanans with needs for healthcare services.

Nursing retention and recruitment, as well as training, are at the top of the list of concerns. Montana's rural landscape provides increased challenges in each of these areas. Most Montana healthcare facilities have nursing openings that are not being filled because there are limited numbers of applicants. This not only impacts patient care but causes a heavier workload for nurses, which results in high turnover rates and can potentially result in safety and wellness issues for both the nurse and patient. Limited nursing programs and space in Montana for those that are interested in pursuing a nursing career contributes to the nursing shortage. Each fall, the Montana nursing programs provide a report to the Montana Board of Nursing on the status of the programs. One of the items they report is the number of applicants that submit their application but are not accepted – many of these applications meet the requirements but are not able to be accepted due to the limited number of openings each program has.⁹ Tim is committed to the expansion of education and training of medical professionals, including nurses in Montana.

Medical facilities (especially rural healthcare providers) find it challenging to provide the nursing staff with the required education such as Advanced Life Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support, Neonatal Resuscitation Program, Trauma Nursing Core Course, as well as many others. These classes are labor-intensive and require additional requirements for those teaching, making it challenging for small rural hospitals to provide this opportunity. Tim is committed to ensuring that nursing students have options for pursuing medical education in Montana.

Nurses, like all other medical professionals, are concerned with unnecessary regulation that does not put the focus on patients or the quality of care being provided. The nurse leaders of Montana are dedicated to quality care and understand the importance of regulation. The Fox administration will put nurses at the forefront and focus on the elimination of unnecessary regulation and burden.





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DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Moral obligation to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves

We have a moral obligation to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves. In the realm of those with mental health and developmental disabilities, there are those individuals that need extraordinary care, and community-based care should be the topic of discussion. The closer to home and the less institutional the setting, the better for those in need.

Additionally, there are those in both areas that want to be and need to be more independent. For those individuals, we must work towards the most effective and efficient care possible by using outcome-based or evidence-based methods of care. It will be better for those in need (effective) and eliminate the discussion of tax cuts, or tax increases, in the healthcare field (efficiencies).

Tim understands the need for and is committed to caring for those that cannot care for themselves. This is a true role of government, and the Fox administration will do everything possible to ensure this care is available, efficient, and affordable.

MENTAL HEALTH

An ever-growing problem

Tim will promote a cabinet-level position focusing on mental health.

This includes, but not limited to:

- Promotion of the Family First Prevention Services Act** – to prevent children from entering foster care by allowing federal reimbursement for mental health services, and in-home parent skill training.¹⁰
- Reinstate funding for Mental Health** – The current administration has transferred \$23M out of Children’s Mental Health Bureau, which will stop under the Fox Administration. Tim will promote community-based mental health support to allow children and families in crisis to get the resources that the legislature already approved.¹¹
- Children’s Care Initiatives** – will be promoted to allow for effective and the least restrictive interventions that are rooted in evidenced-based models service delivery. Tim Fox played a leadership role in the creation of the Montana Healthcare Foundation, which found that “children and youth with mental health issues are best supported through a continuum of care that provides ongoing services.”¹² Tim Fox supports the efforts of the Behavioral Health Alliance of Montana and is committed to creating conditions where Montana’s mental health issues can be addressed in a safe, sustainable, and empowering approach.

¹⁰ Collaboration for Behavioral Health, Letter from Executive Director Mary Windecker, January 2020

¹¹ Collaboration for Behavioral Health, Letter from Executive Director Mary Windecker, January 2020

¹² Collaboration for Behavioral Health, Letter from Executive Director Mary Windecker, January 2020



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ASSISTED LIVING

Serving elderly and disabled individuals

There are about 200 licensed assisted living facilities (ALFs) in Montana, serving elderly and disabled individuals who need assistance and are unable to stay in their own homes. Most individuals living in assisted care facilities pay for their own care. The cost of care at this level is considerably less than nursing home care. Assisted living facilities in Montana serve only about 700 clients under the Medicaid HCBS program, leaving a waiting list for those requesting entry.¹³

Basically, the government has put a cap on the number of Montanans that can have access to assisted living facilities. Most assisted living facilities limit the number of beds dedicated to Medicaid patients due to Medicaid rates. As a means to provide more long-term care for our most vulnerable populations, consideration should be given and comparisons made to increase the number of Montanans that the HCBS waiver program serves in order to prevent the more expensive entry into nursing home facilities. Tim will work with the legislature to ensure that slots available are maximized and reimbursement rates paid to those who provide the services to be more in line with what those who pay privately.

AGING POPULATIONS/NURSING HOMES

Montana's population continues to age and so will the need for more nursing home facilities and care

Montana's population continues to age and so will the need for more nursing home facilities and care. Over 60% of those in nursing homes are on Medicaid.¹⁴ With the cost of healthcare, workforce shortages, and federal government regulations driving up the cost of care for our elderly, Medicaid rates are not keeping pace with inflation. Tim's administration will fight to keep pace with funding for our most vulnerable populations. We will work with our federal partners on reforming healthcare and maintaining costs, and push back against federal regulations calling for more administrative staffing, and unnecessary training and paperwork. We also understand that workforce shortages demand the maintaining of competitive direct care wages to continue to attract workers to this area.

ALZHEIMER'S/MEMORY CARE

Bring more healthcare workers to the field of Alzheimer's/Memory Care

It should come as no surprise that Montana is aging. By 2030, one-third of our population will be seniors.¹⁵ Even with improvements to stop or prevent Alzheimer's or other memory affecting diseases, these diseases will continue to be a significant risk for Montanans. Tim understands the geographic challenges unique to states as large as Montana, and the need to educate our rural communities and providers of this risk.

The Fox administration understands the growing need for care facilities and will work to find efficiencies in State Government to bolster direct care worker wages to bring more healthcare workers to the field of Alzheimer's/Memory Care.

¹³ Hughes, R. (2014, January). Adult Residential Assisted Living. Montana Healthcare Association. <https://leg.mt.gov/content/Committees/Interim/2013-2014/Children-Family/Meetings/January-2014/hughes-assisted-living-jan2014.pdf>

¹⁴ (2019, January). Medicaid in Montana. DPHHS. <https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/Documents/biennialreports/MedicaidInMontana2019Report.pdf>

¹⁵ Over 60 in the 406. Montana Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. DPHHS. https://dphhs.mt.gov/Portals/85/publichealth/documents/BRFSS-Factors/BRFSS_Over_60_in_the_406.pdf



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NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH

Better state solutions for our Native American citizens

Studies and reports show striking disparities between health outcomes for members of Montana's federally and state-recognized Native American Tribes and the general Montana population. Years of challenges in Indian Country created higher per capita death rates for Montana's Native Americans for many illnesses, including heart disease, cancer, respiratory illnesses, injuries, and suicide. Our Indigenous brothers and sisters suffer mortality rates more than twenty years earlier than non-Native Montanans.¹⁶

It should not be acceptable to any Montanan that any particular segment of our society is more susceptible to poor health outcomes, primarily because of their ethnicity or geographic locality. While much of the healthcare delivery system for Montana's Native American citizens is the responsibility of the federal government, the Fox administration will both encourage better federal engagement and outcomes, and better state solutions for our Native American citizens. Tim accepts these responsibilities not only because he is a native Montanan, but because he is an adopted Apsáalooke - Crow person. The contributions of Montana's first citizens are extremely important to who we are as a state and as a people. We must do better for the health of all Montanans, especially those who are at greater risk of adverse health outcomes.

RURAL AIR AMBULANCE SERVICES

Delivery of rural air ambulance services

Montana's huge expansive geography can be healthy, calming, and of great solitude, and at the same time, challenging when it comes to the delivery of healthcare services. Of particular importance to citizens in remote corners of Montana is the issue of access to affordable air ambulance services when distances and time can mean the difference between life and death. As with many healthcare policy issues, there are often no easy answers when it comes to ambulatory transportation costs, insurance reimbursement rates, and competition in the air ambulance marketplace. However, Tim Fox has a proven record of bringing people together to identify challenges and to find creative and acceptable solutions. The Fox administration commits to bringing all stakeholders together to engage in discussions on how Montana can fairly and equitably provide for the health and safety of her citizens when it comes to air ambulance services. No candidate for governor has a better record of finding consensus and crafting innovative and successful results. Working together, we can save lives and improve the health of all Montanans, and that can be done with the delivery of rural air ambulance services just as it can be done with other challenging issues and concerns.



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HOSPITALS

Hospitals provide care for our citizens, both urban and rural communities

Hospitals provide care for our citizens, both in our urban and rural communities. In many of our communities, the local hospital(s) are the largest employers. Without access to hospitals at the local level, Montanans would be forced to travel long distances, deal with changing and dangerous weather, and experience added cost to get needed healthcare. Rural and frontier states like Montana rely upon local healthcare facilities to keep our communities vibrant, thriving, and affordable. Tim understands the importance of access to healthcare, and his administration will work to ensure Montana citizens can be treated locally whenever possible.

Hospitals generally support transparent pricing but want to provide this pricing to patients using policies and systems that do not add unnecessary costs, which are then passed along to the patients. Federal and state mandates dealing with transparency are often burdensome and provide no benefits to the users of healthcare. Tim is committed to healthcare transparency policies and will work with healthcare providers and hospitals to ensure that regulation is sensible, usable, and affordable.

Hospitals have an aging workforce of physicians, especially in rural areas.¹⁷ The lack of medical training and education in Montana, coupled with reduced availability of clerkship and residency slots result in challenges for hospital recruitment of physicians. Tim is committed to medical education in Montana, providing Montana students with opportunities to educate, train, and practice medicine in our state.

The cost of prescription drugs and medical devices has outpaced inflation and has contributed to the high cost of providing medical services.¹⁸ Through the use of the Health Insurance Exchange, working with our federal partners, and other policies that will be implemented by the Fox administration, we will reduce the cost of providing healthcare to Montanans.

Regulatory policies, while well-intentioned, often do nothing to affect patient safety and wellness. The goal of any regulation should be a policy that imposes minimal burdens on providers while ensuring public safety. Tim is committed to working directly with hospitals and with the Montana Hospital Association and other industry experts to identify existing or pending state regulation, policy, law, or rule that can be eliminated because they add cost to healthcare without providing benefit or safety to users of healthcare.

Quality and access to services have been a top priority of hospitals throughout Montana. Unfortunately, the implementation of quality measures and additional services adds cost for users of healthcare. Tim will work with the provider community to implement policies that will identify how the state can support the services offered while ensuring that these services are provided with high quality, and still reducing the overall cost of healthcare to parties that use them.

¹⁷ Montana Hospital Association. <https://mtha.org/mha-workforce/health-care-workforce-facts/>

¹⁸ Picchi, A. (2019, July). Drug prices in 2019 are surging, with hikes at 5 times inflation. CBS News. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/drug-prices-in-2019-are-surging-with-hikes-at-5-times-inflation/>



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HOSPITALS CONT'D

Innovation is critical in the practice of healthcare delivery. Montana must ensure that the medical industry is not burdened with policy or regulation that does not allow for medical innovation. Practices such as telemedicine are critical and can help reduce the cost of providing healthcare in Montana. Gone are the days when a sick person needs to travel for all healthcare services, potentially exacerbating the illness and putting others at risk for the illness. The current issue with the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic is a prime example of why we need to have the option to treat patients in a home setting using advanced innovations like telemedicine. Tim supports innovation and outside-the-box policy and will bring the best minds to his administration to ensure that Montana stays at the top of technology.

Critical Access Hospitals struggle with financial security on a daily basis. Recruitment and retention of medical staff are challenging, with pay and benefits for rural healthcare employers at a different level than in the urban setting.¹⁹ Small hospitals must often rely on traveling nurses and other contracted medical professionals who are expensive and increase cost-shifting and higher rates. Cost of drugs and medical devices, turnover of medical staff, complex IT and reporting requirements, and competition for business with Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) in the same small setting all contribute to the financial insecurity of Critical Access Hospitals. Partnership with well-performing larger hospital systems may result in better financial stability for smaller hospitals. However, partnership with larger systems that are experiencing issues with financial stability can put the smaller system at higher risk. The old adage of "the bigger the better" has not shown to be a sure path to success in healthcare. Tim understands the needs and challenges of providing healthcare in rural Montana and will work with small Critical Access Hospitals in each of these areas.





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INSURERS

Nearly half of Montana citizens are insured through Small Group or Employer Group coverage

Nearly half of Montana citizens are insured through Small Group or Employer Group coverage. In 2019, 8.6 percent of Montanans were uninsured with the balance being covered by the Group policies, Medicaid/Medicare and other governmental programs.²⁰

Insurance companies deal with many issues, including drug pricing, differing payment models, coverage mandates, and additional parties (i.e. community paramedicine providers) looking for payment for services provided. Insurers believe that drug manufacturers are, in large part, to blame for high drug pricing, however, many potential solutions in these areas must be legislated at the federal level. The Tim Fox administration will focus on transparency and oversight of pharmaceutical manufacturers, pharmaceutical benefit managers (PBM's), and pharmaceutical distributors, and will orchestrate actions at the State level to ensure affordable costs for healthcare users.

New healthcare coverage mandates (i.e. autism, hearing aids, chiropractors) do provide valuable coverage for many Montana families, but the mandates result in higher premiums and cost for all users of healthcare. Legislation that increases the numbers and types of covered services cost more to insurers, which then shift the cost to insured parties. The Fox administration will perform cost/benefit analyses on any new coverage mandates to ensure that the mandates are affordable and do not contribute to increases in costs for the majority of insured members. The consumer needs more choice.

The State Employee Health Plan currently utilizes a fee-for-service model. The state plan is projecting a \$50 million-plus deficit by 2021.²¹ The fee-for-service model is not working and needs to be restructured jointly by the State and insurers to ensure the plan remains viable. Value-Based Care versus Regulation of Health Care Pricing needs to be implemented, including potentially re-contracting of the state employee health plan under a value-based care model rather than its current fee-for-service model. This could save taxpayers millions of dollars and improve the health of the employees and dependents. Tim is committed to action that will not regulate healthcare pricing by blindly focusing on unit cost, which does not pay for quality, and results in cost-shifting.

Medicaid Privatization is something that should be considered, including exploring the use of Medicaid Managed or Integrated Care in Montana. Third-party administrators that specialize in integrating medical/behavioral/pharmaceutical could potentially save Montana taxpayers money by implementing value-based care models into Medicaid. Tim Fox is committed to exploring all options to reduce the cost of healthcare services in Montana.

20 Lechner Goe, C. J.D. (2019). 2019 Report on Health Coverage and Montana's Uninsured. Montana Healthcare Foundation. http://reinsurance.mt.gov/Portals/212/2019-MT-Uninsured-Rate-Report_6_3_19-FINAL.pdf

21 Legislative Budget Analysis 2021 Biennium. Montana Legislature. <https://leg.mt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/interim/-Dec-2018/Volume1-Preliminary.pdf>



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CONCLUSION

We Want to Hear From You

The delivery of healthcare services is a complex issue, especially in a rural state like Montana. Healthcare stakeholders often look to the State Government for assistance, whether it be legislative or financial. A new administration must explore new, innovative and bold approaches, which include bringing healthcare leaders from across the entire Montana healthcare spectrum (for example, a "Montana Health Care Innovation Board") into a single discussion arena for the benefit of resolving healthcare issues in Montana.

Any new program implemented at the state level and developed by a new administration should also involve reducing the expense of (or eliminating) existing, less-effective programs. We do not need to create "another-government-program." What we need is leadership that will overcome communication barriers, will partner with the private sector, and will replace ineffective policies and practices with plans that will truly benefit the health and safety of all Montanans.

The Fox administration is committed to finding the most effective and efficient ways to spend taxpayer dollars without raising taxes. "Effective" has to be the keyword in the conversation for healthcare, with efficiencies coming from promoting the best practices that deliver the best healthcare to Montanans. Effective and affordable policies can only result from ongoing discussions between government, industry leaders, and our citizens in the healthcare arena. Tim is a leader that can bring the government, the private sector, and our citizens together to solve problems and implement strategies that are practical, achievable, affordable, and effective.

Politics, rhetoric, or fear of the unknown cannot be an excuse for allowing ineffective or outdated Montana healthcare policies to remain in place. With Tim Fox's leadership, Montana will engage in the thoughtful and deliberate restructuring of our healthcare system to maximize positive health outcomes while increasing access and reducing costs. The status quo is unacceptable, and the State government must continually strive for the most effective, efficient, and affordable means to deliver healthcare services. Tim Fox is experienced in dealing with change, innovation, and results. He is relentless in his desire to create meaningful and lasting change, and he is committed to working with all Montanans to lead Montana into a healthier future.

The Montana United conversation is just the beginning steps towards a safer, more prosperous future. The policies and positions are a starting point for Montanans to submit constructive comments and ideas for the Fox/Knokey administration to consider. Any programs, policies or positions in the Fox/Knokey administration will be the product of the ideas, comments and thoughtful criticism of engaged Montanans who participate in a civil discourse for the betterment of the state of Montana. The Fox/Knokey Team welcomes your comments and ideas which can be submitted at FoxForGovernor.com/Strategy. Thank you in advance for your participation and together we will strive to become a United Montana. Our best days are still ahead.