

United States Senate

January 5, 2016

Amber Berrian, MPH, Public Health Analyst
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Ms. Berrian:

I am writing on behalf of the Health Resources and Services Administration Network Development Planning Grant (CFDA No. 93.912) application submitted by St. Joseph Medical Center to support the Western Montana Rural Nursing Collaborative (WMRNC).

Montana's counties are considered Medically Underserved Populations or Areas, and providing high-quality, cost-effective healthcare to the citizens of these medically underserved counties requires a collaborative effort. If successful, funds will be used by St. Joseph Medical Center to engage a network of hospitals serving rural communities in the planning of the WMRNC. The WMRNC expects to improve healthcare and manage costs through telemedicine opportunities, by the development of standardized nursing policies and procedures, and by the identification of means to address nursing shortages in rural hospitals.

I support collaborative projects that identify ways to lower healthcare costs and maintain high-quality healthcare for Montanans within their rural communities. I trust you will give this grant proposal fair and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



Steve Daines
United States Senator