



Why Does Global Health Matter to Montana?

Probably for more reasons than you think. Even though the term “global health” refers to diseases and health issues that disproportionately affect developing countries, global health matters to Montana. It matters to the state’s economy and to the health of its residents.

Montana has global ties . . .

- . . . through trade and commerce.

In 2007, Montana exported \$1.1 billion worth of goods to 121 foreign destinations. Montana’s global exports increased by 212 percent over the last five years, the largest such increase among the 50 states. Some of Montana’s trade partners are developing countries in Asia, Africa, and South America.

- . . . through foreign investment.

Montana benefits from foreign investment and the creation of “insourced” jobs – employment by companies that are based outside the United States. In 2006, about 6,800 Montanans worked for foreign-owned companies, which invest in Montana’s economy as they expand their operations in the Treasure State.

- . . . through its colleges and universities.

In the 2006-2007 academic year, 958 foreign students studied at Montana universities. International students and their families contributed \$20 million to the state’s economy.



Global Ties Benefit Montana

Montana's global ties benefit the state's economy, providing billions of dollars in revenue and thousands of jobs. For example, one in 10 manufacturing workers in Montana depends on international exports for his or her job.

These Ties Can Be Jeopardized by Global Health Crises

Montana's global ties link the state's economic health to the health and economic growth of other countries and regions. When health care crises in other countries threaten economic and political stability, they can end up affecting Montana as well.

What's the Link between Health and Wealth?

Epidemics and other health crises affect the ability of entire communities to work and limit the potential for economies to develop. The following examples illustrate the link between global health and economic development:

- Malaria costs Africa \$12 billion in lost economic output every year. It is estimated that without malaria, the economic output of several African countries, some of which are important trade partners for Montana businesses, would be 30 percent greater than it is today. Montana exports \$20 million worth of goods to Africa every year.
- UNAIDS estimates that the HIV rate in China is rising by 20-30 percent every year. China is a valuable trading partner for Montana, purchasing nearly \$44 million worth of Montana exports in 2007 alone.

Research to Improve Global Health Benefits Montana

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is a world leader in biomedical research that improves health in the United States and around the world. Most of the research that is funded by NIH is conducted on university campuses across the country. NIH awards many grants to Montana universities, which in turn bring money and jobs to Montana. In 2007, Montana received approximately \$38 million in research grants and contracts from NIH, which helped create and support 703 new jobs. Some of this research will go on to spur innovations in medicine that will improve domestic and global health. Grants from NIH bring jobs and higher wages to Montana at the same time that they help the world to make progress in global health.

Historic Connections: Montana, NIH, and Biomedical Research

Today, many states have a stake in global health and bioscience research. However, unlike any other state in the United States, Montana has a long history of conducting infectious disease research, as it hosts Rocky Mountain Laboratory, a key facility for the NIH National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Division of Intramural Research. Early settlers in the Bitterroot Valley of western Montana were often plagued by Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, a deadly disease that causes severe dark rashes and fever. After being granted statehood in 1889, the Montana State Board of Health brought health scientists to the Bitterroot Valley to investigate the disease. In 1928, Rocky Mountain Laboratory was constructed in order to conduct research on infectious diseases. And in 1937, Rocky Mountain Laboratory joined NIH and became a “national vaccine factory” by producing vaccines to protect World War II soldiers against spotted fever, typhus, and yellow fever.



Almost a century later, Rocky Mountain Laboratory continues to research infectious diseases with the long-term goal of developing effective control strategies, diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics. Researchers study agents that cause sexually transmitted diseases, preventable blindness, and respiratory diseases. Many of these infectious diseases disproportionately affect developing countries. For instance, research on ways to prevent and eradicate *Chlamydia trachomatis*—the pathogen that causes Trachoma, which can lead to preventable blindness—would help improve the health of more than 6 million infected individuals worldwide, and it would have a positive social and economic impact as well.

Rocky Mountain Laboratory has played a significant role in the health of Montanans and continues to invest in the health of the global community. Employing at least 350 people over 33 acres of land, Rocky Mountain Laboratory benefits Montana while simultaneously helping developing countries move toward healthier societies and more robust economies.

Conclusion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are taking the lead in the research and development of drugs and vaccines aimed at improving global health and lessening the impact of deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria.

To find out how we can accelerate the search for better medical technologies, please visit www.familiesusa.org/issues/global-health.

Sources available upon request from Families USA.



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