



## Montana University System

# WICHE PSEP

Professional Student Exchange Program

### WICHE Facts

- MT has participated in WICHE PSEP for 63 years.
- More than 1,550 MT residents have earned professional degrees through WICHE PSEP.
- Montana PSEP fields of study:
  - ✓ Dentistry
  - ✓ Medicine
  - ✓ Occupational Therapy
  - ✓ Optometry
  - ✓ Osteopathic Medicine
  - ✓ Podiatry
  - ✓ Veterinary Medicine
- MT residents receive preference in admission and pay reduced levels of tuition.
- The average return rate of MT students graduating from WICHE PSEP is 60%.
- FY16 state contribution per student and field:
  - Dental - \$24,850
  - Medicine - \$32,070
  - Occupational Therapy - \$13,050
  - Optometry - \$17,100
  - Osteopathic Medicine- \$21,300
  - Podiatry - \$14,770
  - Veterinary Medicine - \$31,900
- Sharing educational resources throughout the West is fiscally responsible and cost effective for Montana.

### Program Summary

Montana joined the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), a 15-state commission working to boost access to and success in higher education for students in the West, in 1951. The **Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)** is one of three exchange programs offered through WICHE. PSEP is aimed at providing affordable access to professional education primarily in the healthcare professions and enables students in 12 western states the opportunity to apply to selected out-of-state professional programs which are not available at public institutions in-state.

Montana has been sending students to professional programs through WICHE PSEP since 1953 and currently supports 80 professional students annually in the fields of dentistry, medicine, occupational therapy, optometry, osteopathic medicine, podiatry and veterinary medicine.

#### Program Goals and Benefits:

1. Facilitate sharing of higher education resources within the Western region in an effort to provide affordable access to professional education, primarily in the healthcare professions
2. Provide Montana with a cost effective means to provide professional education to state residents without the expense of creating and maintaining all professional programs in-state

### **How Does the Program Work?**

Residents of Montana can apply to various professional programs within the WICHE region in specific fields of study. The large WICHE network of participating programs greatly expands the number of schools available to Montana residents. For example, Montanans have the opportunity to apply to 14 dental schools; 17 medical schools; 15 occupational therapy programs; 4 optometry schools; 8 osteopathic schools; 3 podiatry programs; and 5 veterinary medicine programs. WICHE PSEP students receive preference in admission and if selected for funding, pay reduced levels of tuition.

### **State Support**

In addition to the tuition paid by each PSEP student, Montana pays a “support fee” to the admitting school to help cover the cost of the students' education; this fee is negotiated between WICHE and the cooperating programs. The number of students supported is determined through state legislative appropriation. In FY16 the state appropriated \$2.29M to support a total of 80 professional students across seven professional fields. Historically, 60 percent of PSEP students return to Montana to pursue their professional careers. In addition, in 2015-16 the state received four PSEP students and \$50,425 in support fees from other Western states.