WHAT IS A RETREAT?
A retreat is an intentional time away to experience a new awareness—an opportunity to get some distance and see things from a different perspective. It requires a pace that is unhurried and conducive to rest, relaxation, and contemplation in order to return with a new sense of purpose.

A retreat is a chance for an encounter with other people, with issues, and with self. It is an intentional strategy to withdraw from everyday life. When we retreat, it is not for the purpose of just getting away and staying away. Everything involved in getting away, and all that is done while away, focuses on coming back with a renewed sense of meaning.

This retreat is in no way like a typical medical conference. Participant engagement and participation is critical—a high degree of interaction is required for its goals to be met.

Our intention is to deepen our relationship with work through shared activities, reflection and meditation. Retreats deepen the fellowship of a community through shared experiences and can focus the energy of a group, accomplishing more than any one individual could possibly hope for alone. (1)

WHO SHOULD GO TO THIS RETREAT?
The Mindful Practice retreat is designed for physicians and APCs who wish to re-connect with meaning and purpose in medicine and (re)connect with colleagues. We initially plan to draw from employed and affiliated Intermountain Healthcare medical staff, but will likely have openings for community medical professionals.

This is a highly interactive program, unlike any “typical conference.” Participation in this program has been shown to improve burnout (cynicism, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization), increase empathy and compassion toward patients and colleagues, and increase mindfulness and compassion to oneself.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THIS RETREAT?
This retreat will involve secular mindfulness meditation, interactive discussions led by the retreat organizers (Leaman and Potter), participant one-on-one and group discussions, and exercises including light yoga, and time for personal reflection.

The goal, through these activities, is to deepen our relationship with work and self.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT TO GET OUT OF THIS RETREAT?
A renewed sense of purpose for the practice of medicine; mindful ways to improve care of self and patients, tools to cope with burnout; perspectives on compassion, empathy and grief; mindfulness meditation instruction and practice; ways to incorporate mindfulness in personal and professional life; and a future resource and community of like-minded colleagues. (2,3)

WHO SHOULD NOT ATTEND THIS RETREAT?
Participants should plan to stay at the Alta Lodge for the entire meeting. Pricing is contingent on all participants.

Successful participation in this program means a commitment to staying at the Alta Lodge for the entire duration of the sessions, with no visiting family members and a willingness to suspend work obligations.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS INTERMOUNTAIN MINDFUL PRACTICE® PROGRAMS:
“I really think I was very close to quitting medicine in the last 6 months - I was stressed and harried and miserable. I have made several changes in my personal and professional life that have helped me fall back in love with medicine.”

“It opened up my mind in staggering ways-unbelievably valuable.”

“The didactic and practice are both relevant and important-life changing content...Enthusiasm and kindness of the instructors and practical nature of the material...Very personal CME experience presented in an inviting and non-threatening way...Interaction (guided) with other providers and guided meditations...Connectedness to other caregivers...Allows a different view of practice and patient care...be compassionate to patients, be compassionate to myself, okay to be imperfect.”

“Compassion comes in many forms… give myself a break and accept what I give...Shared stories/appreciative inquiry, telling your partner's story...Meditation can dampen response from the amygdala...I can have equanimity.”

“I think I’ve learned traits and skills that will help me be more helpful and effective in my current role.” (4)

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

6:30 AM Optional Morning Meditation
7:30 AM Breakfast
8:30 AM Affinity Groups: informal meetings in groups of 5-6 to discuss a reading
9:00 AM Morning Session: Noticing
12:15 PM Lunch, free time
1:45 PM Affinity Groups
2:15 PM Afternoon Session: Responding to Suffering
5:30 PM Free time
6:30 PM Dinner
7:30 PM Affinity Groups
8:00 PM Evening session: Compassion
9:15 PM Conclude

2. Krasner, M., Epstein, R., Beckman, H., Association of an Educational Program in Mindful Communication with Burnout, Empathy and Attitudes Among Primary Care Physicians, JAMA 293(30) 392-392 12 p 1284, 2009
4. Excerpted from the evaluations of the 8-week Mindful Practice course and Introduction to Mindful Practice classes