

EXHIBIT 1
DATE 1-12-05
HB HJ1

Hearing Date: 01/12/2005
Hearing Room: 472
Hearing Time: 3 P.M.
Chair Person: Arlene Becker

PRC remarks to the House Committee on Human Services.

Chair Becker, and members of the committee, for the record my name is Vicki Turner and I am staff to the Prevention Resource Center housed in DPHHS Director's Office. I am here today representing DPHHS to provide information at the request of the sponsor, Representative Franklin. DPHHS supports HJ1, and we appreciate the opportunity to testify.

The Department's mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being, and self-reliance of all Montanans. To that end, the Department is committed to partner in a wholistic approach toward continuing intraagency and interagency prevention coordination and to support interagency efforts to assist Montanans in need and to combat the substantial effects of substance abuse, especially methamphetamine use in our society. The department of DPHHS has programs specifically for public health that impact prevention at more than substance use level, and can take a leadership role because of it's connectedness as a department to impact systems.

The Interim Committee on Children and Families study, SJ11, of prevention, treatment, justice, etc. regarding substance use resulted in discussion about the Interagency Coordinating Council for State Prevention Programs (ICC), DPHHS, the Prevention Resource Center, Corrections, Montana Board of Crime Control and overall systemic coordination and collaboration. In response to the recommendations from the work done during SJ11, DPHHS established a position to perform intraagency, cross-division planning and coordination for prevention activities, including the prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and abuse, with other public health prevention efforts. This position is housed with the Office of Planning, Coordination and Analysis, which is part of the Director's Office.

Today I will speak about the Prevention Resource Center (PRC). The PRC is unique to state government. The mission of the PRC is to work in partnership with the Interagency Coordinating Council for State Prevention programs to create and sustain a coordinated and comprehensive system of prevention services within and for the state of Montana.

Activities of the Prevention Resource Center are to:

- ✓ Coordinate, research and disseminate prevention related information
- ✓ Provide resources: website, a weekly list-serve called Hot News, and a quarterly professional news journal, *The Prevention Connection*
- ✓ Manage a federal/state/local partnership with AmeriCorps*VISTA for community action

In 1996 the PRC added the VISTA project to provide a prevention resource to communities. The VISTA project's community based efforts compliment the policy work of the ICC policy making and interagency and interagency collaboration on prevention. Our federal partner, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has provided us with a grant for VISTA support. The main focus of our VISTA program is to assist Montana communities in creating and sustaining conditions that reduce risk, as well as promote the safety, personal responsibility, and well-being of our youth.

PRC VISTAs are the "Resource of the Prevention Resource Center" serve for one year in exchange for a nominal stipend and an educational award. Since its inception in 1996, the PRC has sponsored a total of more than 200 VISTA's throughout the state. Currently, we have 24 VISTAs are serving in 12 communities. They are hosted by a variety of community-based agencies, schools, health

departments, state and city governments, youth clubs, and others to help Montana communities develop local prevention infrastructure by:

- ✓ Mobilizing resources,
- ✓ Linking agencies with each other,
- ✓ Writing grants,
- ✓ Organizing community events,
- ✓ Garnering donations from local businesses and organizations,
- ✓ Obtaining resources to initiate, expand and sustain project activities.

More specifically VISTAs work on such things as developing and implementing mentoring programs, recruiting local volunteers, grant writing and helping the community identify solutions and strategies to community defined problems toward eradicating poverty.

During the past five years, the technical services and research functions of the PRC have become institutionalized. They are used as a vital resource by prevention professionals throughout Montana, as can be illustrated by the growing weekly list-serve of Hot News topics, the tremendous number of "hits" to the website, and the jump in the number of people asking to be added to the mailing list of the *Prevention Connection*. In fact, we are at capacity of producing hard copies. This is an ongoing, permanent function needed on a constant and consistent basis. These duties are crucial to the smooth and optimal functioning of the Prevention Resource Center.

HJ1 really articulates the needs of communities and the resources that the PRC can continue to provide. I will add that the PRC is an essential entity to the prevention conversation in Montana. We hope that as you move forward through the next 90 days, that as you discuss prevention strategies, that the PRC is in the fold.

Thank you and I am available for questions.