



Leading Quality Addiction Treatment in the Northern Rockies

EXHIBIT 1  
DATE 1-21-05  
HB HB 31

January 21, 2005

**Testimony In Favor of HB 31  
House and Human Services Committee**

HB 31 represents a crucial link if Montana is to increase it's ability to effectively combat the problem of drug abuse. We believe that the current efforts and system are fragmented and because there is too little communication the impact of the multiple resources being brought to bear on the problem are having less effect than they could if there was better integration and coordination.

Law enforcement has, within the past few years, largely come to the conclusion that enforcement and interdiction are not going to win the war on drug. The epidemic of methamphetamine more than proves them correct. The demand side of equation must be better integrated with the enforcement side and that means treatment providers, law enforcement and prevention efforts talking to one another and planning together.

We additional fragmentation with the Department of Corrections and it's attempt to build it's own addiction treatment system without either coordinating or contracting for services with existing treatment providers. The issue of centralized state delivery of these services versus community-based diversion programs—all of these are significant issues that if resolved can enhance our efforts to combat Montana's drug problem. If, however, the status quo continues, we can expect little return on our expanding investment of resources beyond what we have today.

HB 31 provides for a cabinet level position referred to as the "drug czar" and provides the opportunity for an individual entity to become the coordinating force for our current fragmented system. As treatment providers, we lend our full support to this concept. This same concept exists in the federal government and serves a similar function. It is highly regarded there and it will work similarly here in Montana. With the reduction in funds currently anticipated by the Board of Crime Control for enforcement efforts, this opportunity to improve service coordination and planning becomes even more critical.

**WE URGE YOUR VOTE IN FAVOR OF HB 31**