

EXHIBIT 22
DATE 2-18-05
HB 682

McCone Co. Health Center
P.O. Box 48
Circle, Mt. 59215
(406) 485-3381

February 17, 2005

House Human Services Committee
Re: HB 682/Social Worker Licensure

Legislators:

I would ask that you decline passage of HB 682. This bill will add a terrible burden to the very small, rural hospitals and nursing homes. Our facility already has a difficult time maintaining our nursing staff; this bill would force us to hire a licensed social worker to provide our social services. Social Service people are even scarcer than RNs in the work force. Here are just a few of the problems this bill would create:

- Affording to hire a full-time social worker would be impossible because of the shortage of social workers in (especially the eastern part of) the state.
- Attracting someone to a part-time position would also be impossible. A part-time position is not desirable enough for someone to relocate to Circle, Montana.
- When the facility does require more extensive services than what we have available, the nearest professional willing to do consults is over 100 miles away.
- If we cannot provide social services due to staff shortage, we cannot admit residents (per federal regulations); without admissions, our facility will not survive and this will not be in the best interests of our community.

Currently, my Activity Director doubles as our Social Service person and she does not have a degree. We have not received any State deficiencies for operating in this manner and our resident needs are being met. We have received no complaints from residents or family members. Requiring the very small facilities to meet this requirement is absolutely unrealistic. The little guys have a difficult time just keeping nursing staff, please don't place an even greater burden on us.

Sincerely,

Peggy Aakre
Administrator