EXHIBIT 16
DATE Jan. 14, 2005
HB

My name is April Staudinger and I live in Billings. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak here today.

My son Casey is 8 ½ years old and has severe cerebral palsy. The severity of his c.p. has left him with a rare seizure disorder, dumping syndrome, bowel difficulties and various orthopedic impairments. He is legally blind, wheelchair dependent and is fed through a feeding tube. Regardless of all that, Casey is a happy, healthy boy. He has a smile that tickles your heart and can make you go from grumpy to happy in an instant. He has many meaningful relationships and is an integral part of his home, his school and his community. Last year when Casey was hospitalized for a severe lung infection, he received 25 hand drawn get well cards from his school mates (there were only 9 children in his self contained classroom). We are very fortunate to have such an inspirational child.

We are also fortunate to have had S.T.E.P (Support and Techniques for Empowering People) with us every inch of the way! Had it not been for the educational, financial and emotional support we have received through S.T.E.P., I would not be here today, celebrating Casey's successes.

Casey has been receiving intensive services from S.T.E.P. since he was 3. These services have supported us in 3 major ways; Educational, Financial and Emotional.

EDUCATIONIAL: As Casey has grown and aspects of his disabilities have intensified, S.T.E.P. has guided us on how to educate ourselves to better meet his needs. Sometimes this has entailed lending us material from their library or helping us to research topics via the internet. Occasionally, the educational aspect has enabled me to attend workshops or conferences. I credit the diplomacy I exercise when dealing with school or medical issues in great part to Casey's Family Support Specialist!!!

FINANCIAL: S.T.E.P provides us with financial support in several different ways. By being enrolled in S.T.E.P.'s intensive slot, Casey receives the Medicaid waiver. This waiver pays for items that are not covered by our private insurance. Items such as medication ($150.00/month), pediasure($431.00/month), diapers($110.00/month), feeding supplies(syringes and buttons $804.00/annually) and orthotics($2500.00/annually). If we were to lose this waiver we would have to figure out how to pay the $966.00 average monthly costs out of our pockets. This figure is 1 ½ times our mortgage. Other ways S.T.E.P. has provided us with financial support is by purchasing equipment for Casey as well as paying for home modifications such as the wheel chair ramp we had built 14 months ago. Our next big expenditure is modifying our bathroom for a mechanical lift to help lift our very big boy in and out of the bathtub.

EMOTIONAL: Of all the ways we receive support from S.T.E.P., this is the aspect that is immeasurable! Raising children is often stressful by its self and when you add the complications that arise when raising a child with disabilities, the stress is often overwhelming. Some may even describe it as paralyzing. It is in these times that we call Casey's Family Support Specialist and say…"We need help making this decision or I don't have the emotional energy to do this, can you help us"…. Casey may be facing another major surgery in the upcoming year and you bet I will be leaning on his Family Support Specialist for "support."

As I stated earlier, S.T.E.P. is the acronym for Support and Techniques for Empowering People. I have hopefully given you a clear picture of the supports and techniques. The empowerment comes from what I have done here today; advocating for my son, other

children with disabilities and the agency that gives its heart and soul making sure that we can continue helping our children thrive.

I can not emphasize enough the importance S.T.E.P. plays in our daily lives. We greatly depend on the supports we receive. If we were to lose these services, we would be bankrupt in every aspect of our lives.

I implore you to give S.T.E.P. and agencies alike, the rate increase they so desperately need in order to provide the supports, techniques and empowerment our families depend on!

Thank You!

Monthly Medication Costs NOT Covered by BC/BS
$150.00
TOTAL ANNUAL COST.....$1800.00

Monthly Supply Costs NOT Covered by BC/BS
Pediasure $431.00
Diapers.....$110.00
TOTAL ANNUAL COST.....$6492.00

Bi-annual Supply Costs NOT Covered by BC/BS
12cc Syringes.....$22.00
60cc Syringes.....$30.00
Feeding Button.....$350.00
TOTAL ANNUAL COST....$804.00

Annual Supply Costs NOT Covered by BC/BS
Orthotics.....$2500.00

TOTAL COMBINED ANNUAL COST.....$11,596.00
Average Monthly Cost..... $966.33

These totals do not include, Dr. visits, hospitalizations, or equipment costs (such as wheelchair repairs, etc.)