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I want to touch on four issues before you.

Four years ago, Sen Keenan and I became aware of a young man who had spent much too long in very costly out of home services. Like many young people, he was served by several agencies and no one group wanted to take ownership for him because they couldn't fund all the services he needed. When I ask what it would have taken to get everyone to work together to develop and fund the services he needed, I was told the legislature needed to require people to work together. When I asked for a list of the 100 most expensive kids receiving services, what I found was that 10% of Medicaid eligible youth were consuming 76% of the Medicaid money. 100 kids, the top 10%, accounted for 55% of state dollars.

The legislation was simple - the various divisions were mandated to serve high cost, multi agency kids in their homes and communities, whenever possible. What followed was hard. Folks needed to come together at the local level to figure out how to develop and fund the needed services. A second goal was to identify kids and get them and their families help before they reached high end services.

The progress in 4 years has been incredible. We have reduced out of state placements from about 140 to approximately ³⁴~~40~~, I believe.

Local pilot community teams are involving families because high cost kids too often come from high cost families - families that are receiving a lot of services that often overwhelm or pull them in different directions.

I urge you to grant the spending authority for the SAMSHA grant. It will allow us to work with more communities and tribes to develop local kids management authorities.

Approve the continuation of the 5 field staff to assist local KMA's to create the family based services to monitor cases to see that kids are getting the services they need.

I also urge you to support transitional services for young people as they turn 18. All too often they leave mental health services or foster care or group homes with no help what so ever. The HIFA waiver will help them transition to adult services or to independence.

Finally, I urge you to approve a revised estimate of savings for the Preferred Drug List. I served on the PDL committee that considered drugs for individuals with mental illness. The department listened to the concerns of consumers, families and providers and revised the list and added a strong provider education component.. As a result, there will be less savings than were originally projected but I believe Montana will avoid the problems that have led some other states to eliminate drugs for mental illness from their PDL because of increased costs for hospitalizations.

Thank you.