Big Sky Care Center

EXHIBIT 20
DATE Fri Feb 4 2005
HB

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A Lantis Enterprises Facility

February 4, 2005

Joint Appropriations Subcommittee Members;

I am providing testimony in regards to Nursing Homes and the Medicaid Budget.
I am an RN and have worked as a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator for the past 8 years. I have seen many changes, regulations have become more stringent, surveys have become more punitive, with increased focus on compliance we have taken more time away from providing direct patient care.

I have seen the positive outcomes as a result of past **direct care wage add-ons** that have been provided by the legislature. I continue to support this directed funding as the Nursing Assistants work incredibly hard doing a very difficult task and must be fairly compensated to keep these valuable caregivers in the field. We continue to struggle to find competent compassionate workers to care for our frail elders. We need funding to keep wages competitive.

Please keep the 3% in FY 06 and the direct care wage initiatives as proposed in the Governor's budget.

We continue to **support the use of IGT** money, as this is an additional funding source that decreases the need to use general fund money.

We support legislation to increase the bed tax in nursing homes to support our funding however, the facilities are struggling to find the funds to make these payments on a quarterly basis, at Big Sky alone the quarterly payments are $48,000.

We must fund Nursing Homes to pay for the cost of care. We no longer can cost shift to private pay.

If you have any questions I would be happy to answer them.

Sincerely,

Sherri Maharg
Administrator