

Senate Bill 52

SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

EXHIBIT NO.

3

DATE:

1-10-05

Pre-Admission Screening of Emergency Detention Admissions

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Ed

SB52

Amberg. I am the Director of Montana State Hospital at Warm Springs. As you know, Montana State Hospital is the state's only public in-patient psychiatric treatment facility. We are different from community psychiatric hospitals in several ways that include 1) state law regulates admissions and discharges procedures; 2) we have a significant population of mentally disordered offenders who have been diverted from the criminal justice system; 3) all of our services are paid through state general funds; and 4) we are obligated to admit any person ordered to our Hospital by District or Municipal Courts.

As you all have heard, Montana State Hospital is operating at its licensed capacity. We have frequently been over capacity during the past two years. Our facility was designed for 135 patients. We are budgeted for a patient census of no more than 175. During FY 04, our average daily census was 189, frequently exceeding our maximum licensed capacity, which is also 189. We have little or no ability to manage our census. This impacts us in the following ways: 1) Treatment is compromised because patient needs exceed our capacity to provide quality care; 2) Our budget is impacted because of difficulties managing expenses due to higher than anticipated patient loads; and 3) patients having less than a good experience in treatment are more likely to discontinue treatment upon discharge – and consequently, are more likely to be hospitalized again.

Senate Bill 72 requires pre-admission screening of emergency and court ordered detention admissions to Montana State Hospital. During FY 04, 191 or one-third of the 581 admissions to Montana State Hospital entered on Emergency Detention status (53-21-129, M.C.A.). Another 145 admissions entered on court ordered detention status

(53-21-124, M.C.A.) This is an increase from 109 emergency detentions and 117 court ordered detentions the previous year. A number of the people admitted on either court ordered detention or emergency detention status are intoxicated, under the influence of illicit substances, or have underlying medical problems that could be the cause of the behavior that is leading to the admission. We need to be sure we have the capability to provide proper care and treatment for these individuals. Senate Bill 72, by imposing requirements for screening of these admissions will help us, and help community providers determine whether we do. It does not prevent the admission of persons to Montana State Hospital when there is no other option. It should not lead to the inappropriate incarceration of people with mental illness. It simply leads to better coordination of care between hospital emergency room staff, community mental health center staff, and the professionals at Montana State Hospital.

The impact of this legislation will be the greatest on Butte Silver Bow which had 77 emergency detention admissions to Montana State Hospital and 17 court ordered detention admissions in FY 04. Second was Missoula with 17 emergency detention admissions and 44 court ordered detentions. Third was Lewis and Clark County with 21 emergency detentions and 24 court ordered detentions. All three of these communities have well developed community mental health systems. Missoula has an inpatient psychiatric unit. The requirements of this bill should not impose a significant burden on these communities, but should instead help to enhance the system of care in the community with utilization of Montana State Hospital only when necessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this information to you. I am available for questions.

MSH Emergency Detention and Court Ordered Detentions by County

7/1/03 - 6/30/04

County of Commitment	Total ED Admissions	Total COD Admissions	Total
Silver Bow	77	17	94
Missoula	17	44	61
Lewis & Clark	21	24	45
Gallatin	27	8	35
Deer Lodge	16	6	22
Park	10	10	20
Ravalli	3	10	13
Fergus	2	5	7
Powell	5	2	7
Beaverhead	0	5	5
Sanders	4	1	5
Flathead	1	3	4
Lake	3	1	4
Madison	3	1	4
Custer	0	3	3
Yellowstone	0	2	2
Blaine	0	1	1
Cascade	0	1	1
Judith Basin	0	1	1
Liberty	1	0	1
Musselshell	1	0	1
Total	191	145	336