



**Glendive
Medical
Center**

SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

EXHIBIT NO. 6

DATE: 1-10-05

BILL NO. SB 60

202 Prospect Drive • Glendive, Montana 59330-1999 • (406) 345-3306 • FAX: (406) 345-3358

January 7, 2005

Mr. Brent Cromley, Chair
Senate Public Health Committee

Re: Support for Senate Bill (SB) #60

Dear Chair Cromley,

My name is Scott Duke and I am the Chief Executive Officer for Glendive Medical Center (GMC), a 25 bed Critical Access Hospital (CAH) located in Glendive, Montana. I am writing to ask you and the Senate Public Health Committee to support the passage of SB #60. The bill proposes to increase the acute care bed limit for CAH from its current limit of 15 beds to a 25 bed limit. Your support of SB #60 will help ensure Montana CAH's are able to continue providing much needed healthcare services in rural communities.

Since converting to CAH status in January 2003, GMC has been hampered in its efforts to provide healthcare services due to the current acute care bed limit of 15 beds. By increasing the bed limit to 25 beds, GMC will have the capacity to treat patients locally. Over the past two years GMC has reached the 15 bed acute care limit on a number of occasions. When this happens, GMC is required to transfer patients to another facility outside of the community. The closest facility is more than 50 miles away and this can be problematic for family members and loved ones. Montana's rural health care delivery system is quite fragile. The CAH program has helped to stabilize access throughout the state.

In closing, your support of SB #60 is vital to the future success of CAH in rural Montana. In addition, your support will help bring Montana law into compliance with changes in federal laws that were made last year as result of the passage of the Medicare Modernization Act.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns. I would be happy to visit with you if you should have any questions.

Sincerely,

Scott A. Duke
Chief Executive Office