



SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY	
EXHIBIT NO.	19
DATE:	1-17-05
BILL NO.	SB 110

January 17, 2005

Senator Brent Cromley, Chairman
Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee
Room 350 State Capitol Building
Helena MT 59601

Support SB 110 with Amendments

Chairman Cromley and members of the Committee:

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, my name is Joy Bruck and I am a volunteer advocate for AARP Montana.

AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization with more than 143,000 Montana members in Montana. In our December 2004 Membership survey 86% of our members said the #1 Legislative Priority was "Access to affordable, quality health care".

We strongly believe that any HIFA waivers should be used to expand health care to more Montanans, not limit health care services. From the department's concept paper there appears to be good intent to do a HIFA waiver to provide more important health services for uninsured children, seriously emotionally disturbed youths, and insurance for working parents. For this reason, we stand here today **as proponents of this bill conditional on adoption of three amendments.**

We recommend that the Committee consider the following:

- 1) AARP is concerned about the impact of cost sharing on the poorest Montanans. Section 3 (13) (page 6, line 28) allows the department to adopt rules for "financial participation requirements". This provision should be amended to say that "the financial participation requirements shall not apply to low income Montanans that are under 100% of the federal poverty level." For a single person, 100% of FPL is an income of only \$9,310 a year.
- 2) Amend Section 3(1) "to ensure that home and community based services are made readily available to all those receiving or otherwise in need of nursing home care." Seniors value staying in their homes and ensuring that any future HIFA waivers respect that desire is important. 73% of our members surveyed in the 2004 Membership Survey said remaining in their homes as they age is a high legislative priority.
- 3) Require the agency to seek public comment on a proposed draft HIFA waiver plan, and hold hearings across the state to seek specifics about the impact on people. The

department should provide at least 90 days for written comment as well. Adequate public comment is critical to the success of the Medicaid re-design.

With these changes, we are confident that Department of Public Health and Human Services will be able to move forward in negotiations with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services that will expand services and not limit the "safety net" for the poor in Montana. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to this very important legislation that will impact many Montanans, including many of AARP's members.