

March 4, 2005

SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

EXHIBIT NO. 3

DATE: 3-4-05

HB 318

(Copy for Committee Secretary)

On behalf of the members of the Montana American Association of Diabetes Educators (MAADE) and the diabetes constituency, for which we advocate, we would like to

strongly encourage you to oppose HB 318 as written. MAADE members do not agree that newly created health insurance demonstration projects should eliminate covering diabetes education, treatment, and supplies. We believe if that is done, it will not be in the best interests of our Montana constituents with diabetes. Diabetes education is a core component of care to those with newly diagnosed diabetes and to those needing changes in their treatment plan. Diabetes education provided by accredited programs or certified diabetes educators covers all educational components necessary for diabetes care. These components cover nutrition, activity, medication, blood sugar monitoring, pattern management, treating the short term complications of low blood sugars and high blood sugars, and reducing the risk of long term complications such as cardiovascular disease, eye, kidney, and nerve damage.

Having access to a blood sugar meter and testing supplies in diabetes management is critical. It is extremely difficult, and in some cases impossible, to make medically effective decisions regarding medication adjustments, nutrition and activity changes, preventing and/or treating low blood sugar and high blood sugar patterns without knowing what the blood sugar level is. The data provided by blood sugar is an invaluable tool for both the patient and healthcare provider in the management of diabetes.

If our goal in Montana is to keep our constituents with diabetes healthy in a cost effective manner, then we must include diabetes education, supplies, and treatment in all health insurance demonstration projects. The number of constituents in Montana with diabetes currently is 56,000, and growing on a daily basis. Thank you for considering these important issues when reviewing HB 318.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions, or would like further information on this issue. I can be reached at 457-8946 during business hours, 227-9249 at other hours or at my email – helenamundson635@msn.com.

Sincerely,



Helen Amundson, RN, Certified Diabetes Educator
President-elect, MAADE