SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

EXHIBIT NO. 4

DATE: March 11, 2005

BILL NO. HB 457

Roundup Memorial Healthcare
1202 Third Street West – PO Box 40
Roundup, Montana 59072
Phone (406) 323-2301 Fax (406) 323-3681

March 9, 2005

Senator Brent Cromley
Chair of Senate PHWS Committee
Montana State Senate
Helena, Montana 59601

RE: HB 457

Dear Senator Cromley,

I am writing to you and your committee in support of HB 457. The only way small, rural hospitals can have non-invasive services such as UGI's, Barium enemas, & IVP's performed in their facilities is by allowing Radiologist Assistants (RA) to come to our facility and do the study. The only other alternative will be to send the patients to the bigger cities to have these procedures done, because the Radiologists will not come and do it. There is a nationwide shortage of Radiologists. They are very busy and they can make way more money by staying in the larger city. They will not come to the rural areas because of the travel time involved. The RA is the perfect solution for this and HB 457 will allow them to do that.

I understand the American College of Radiology and other national organizations have raised objections to HB 457. I believe, after reading the bill, that there are enough safeguards in HB 457 to cover their concerns. The qualifications the RA must have are stated in HB 457as is the scope of practice for the RA. Please don't let national organizations, who don't understand the issues of rural healthcare in Montana, influence your decisions.

An RA doing these non-invasive studies will still be transporting the images for a radiologist to interpret. There is no compromising quality of care. The quality of care will be the same as when it is done at the larger hospital.

HB 457 will greatly assist small, rural hospitals. Please support HB 457.

Sincerely,

Lee Rhodes, CEO
Roundup Memorial Healthcare