

It is with regret that I stand in opposition to the confirmation of Dr. Robert Wynia as the Head of the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

I do not know Dr. Wynia personally, my experience with him has been in committee hearings and reading his comments to the press.

I am not impressed with Dr. Wynia in the context that I know him. I am an advocate for low-income families and I work regularly with DPHHS to find creative solutions to the poverty that plagues an alarmingly high percentage of our neighbors. I have good professional relationships with many people at DPHHS, but I know that the Department needs to move in a new direction in order to serve the families that depend on them.

When Dr. Wynia was initially appointed I went to his website to find out about his practice and experience. I was alarmed to find that he did not accept Medicaid patients and has not worked with the populations that DPHHS is trusted to serve. Dr. Wynia has offered that public health insurance is not a necessity for Montanans because of the good will of our physicians. While, I appreciate the charity care that is available, I understand that it is the exception not the rule. The Department must recognize need, recognize their responsibility to meet that need and finally implement policies and programs that will effectively support families struggling with poverty. I have seen no evidence that Dr. Wynia understands the vital role he will play in this effort.

There have been many opportunities for Dr. Wynia to show his creativity, to comment on proposed legislation and participate in this process. I have watched Dr. Wynia act as a spectator, not a participant. On Wednesday, <sup>March 9<sup>th</sup></sup> Dr. Wynia got involved, he wrote an Op-Ed for the Independent Record. He chose as his subject, the issue of confidentiality when DPHHS responds to a specific family's story in the press. This left me disappointed. There are 41,500 uninsured

children in Montana, the TANF block grant has been frozen for almost 10 years, DPHHS is facing a tight budget and a mounting need. There are many subjects that I would like to hear Dr. Wynia address, he has had the opportunity and he has taken a pass.

Governor Schweitzer has promised a new day for Montana. I don't believe that Dr. Wynia can provide that sunrise for the people Gov. Schweitzer calls "the last and the least."