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March 18, 2005

To: Members, Senate State Administration Committee

From: Board of Directors, Montana Chapter National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

RE: Opposition to the appointment of Dr. Wynia as Director of the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)

We write to express the lack of confidence we, as social work professionals, have in Dr. Wynia as proposed director of DPHHS. We have watched with growing excitement as directors of other governmental agencies with excellent credentials and experience were appointed. We were however, quite dismayed with the choice of Dr. Wynia as the director of DPHHS. With 565 members in our association, our members are serving potentially thousands of Montana citizens, many of whom experience significant barriers ranging from illness, poverty, disability, and abuse and neglect.

The person in this job needs experience and knowledge of the vast array of services provided by DPHHS, awareness and empathy for the constituencies, and ability to handle the intense federal negotiations that will be coming this year with Medicaid reform.

In addition, with the size and complexity of DPHHS and the enormous amount of state and federal dollars involved, this job requires a proven track record of management skills. We have no evidence Dr. Wynia has the appropriate qualifications from his resume.

We are asking that you not confirm the appointment of Dr. Wynia as director of DPHHS. We seek the appointment of a director who will provide the kind of leadership social work professionals, and the clients we serve, can have confidence in.