



*"Committed to the protection and promotion of public health."*

EXHIBIT 12  
DATE 2/9/07  
HB 465

## Gallatin City-County Health Department

February 8, 2007

The Honorable Rick Jore, Chairman  
House of Representatives Education Committee  
Montana State House of Representatives  
PO Box 200400  
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Regarding: HB No. 465

I would like to urge a vote against House Bill No. 465 aimed at allowing religious exemption from immunization for youth who attend preschool, school, or day care. Allowing religious exemption for young children to meet immunization requirements would increase the population of un-immunized children; and, therefore would increase the risk of exposure to other vulnerable individuals who have not yet completed their series of immunizations due to age.

In the past three years, Gallatin County had a child under age one who died after exposure to pertussis (Whooping Cough), a highly contagious, serious and vaccine-preventable disease for younger children. Another young child was seriously impacted by pertussis and underwent a long and costly hospital stay. To help protect our community's children in the future, we need to maintain measures that ensure a high immunization rate among children at schools and day cares.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Nelson, RN, MSN  
Health Officer