



AARP Montana
30 W. 14th Street
Suite 301
Helena, MT 59601

T 1-866-295-7278
F 406-441-2230
TTY 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org/mt

EXHIBIT 3 HUH
DATE 1-14-09
HB 105

January 14th, 2009

TO: Members of the House Human Services Committee

FROM: Rita Charles, volunteer advocate for AARP Montana

RE: Support of HB 105 Reporting of emergency room and hospitalization discharge data

Madame Chair and members of the committee, my name is Rita Charles and I'm a volunteer advocate for AARP Montana, a non-profit, non-partisan organization with 165,000 members. AARP Montana believes that information is the cornerstone to quality and efficient healthcare, and therefore strongly supports this bill.

As may have been mentioned earlier, the mission of the Public Health and Safety Division of DPHHS is to improve the health status of all Montanans to the highest level possible. AARP Montana believes in this goal as well, and we believe that work is sometimes necessary to achieve better results. In this case, we believe that the knowledge that could be gathered from this data collection could help all Montanans be healthier and policy makers make better informed decisions. Before my retirement I had worked for 51 years, including education, as an RNJ and a nurse anesthetist and have witnessed how compilation of data can change medicine. The uniqueness of our large rural state may reveal problems other states do not have.

Anything that improves the health of Montanans should be a priority, and the information to be gathered in these specific registries affects older Montanans more than others. If there is a dangerous trend affecting the health quality of Montanans, it is likely that it is disproportionately affecting older citizens. Collection of this data could help identify and solve any of these problems.

Again, I urge your support of House Bill 105 on behalf of myself and AARP Montana, because this is an idea that will help make a healthier, safer state. Thank you.