EXHIBIT 2 HUM
DATE 1-23-09
HB 243

Transforming Attitudes, Helping Families Succeed:
The Montana Children's System of Care, 2001 to 2008

The 2001 Legislature recognized that Montana was failing children with significant mental health care needs and their families. Families did not know where to turn for help, community services were few, agencies and providers did not communicate or work together. The system was wasteful and unresponsive, children were unnecessarily removed from their homes and communities, high numbers of children were sent to out of state facilities, families were shut out of the decision-making process, and outcomes were poor.

In 2001 and 2003, the Legislature directed Montana's agencies to begin transforming the way they did business by developing a system that was:

Child- and family-centered
Community-based
Culturally competent
Dedicated to early identification and intervention
Based on evidence-based practices

In 2004, the Department obtained a federal grant to help fund that transformation. The System of Care grant was used to create five Kids Management Authorities. The Blackfeet Reservation also has a separate federal grant to implement System of Care.

KMA's have a dual identity

- As care coordination and service development organizations, they bring together agencies, schools, parents and providers to develop outcomes-based and coordinated treatment strategies that support child and their families in their homes and communities.
- As community leadership organizations, they foster family leadership, develop community partnerships and provide state and local policy direction.

The six KMA's have broken new ground in the last four years:

- Reducing the number in Medicaid-funded out of state services from a high of 52 in 2007 to 16 today.
- Implementing an evaluation program to track participating children and provide hard outcomes data to guide policy makers in the future.
- Training parents, providers and educators in the wrap-around philosophy of care.
- Beginning to transform attitudes that historically stigmatized and excluded parents of children with mental health care needs.
- Implementing a treatment planning and coordination model that puts parents in the driver's seat.
- Creating partnerships among formerly competing agencies.
- Energizing communities to expand recreational and enrichment activities for at-risk youth.

KMA's work for Montana. Seven years after the Legislature first directed the State to begin transforming the way it serves at-risk children, the transformation is well under way. Now is the time to take system's change to more Montana communities, by creating new KMA's and transitioning from the federal dollars we have been using to build the system, to the State dollars we will need to sustain it.

Please support the System of Care for Children's Mental Health:

-Fully fund the Children's Mental Health Bureau budget
-HB 65 Provides funding for the existing KMAs, new KMAs and Wraparound
-HB 66 Appropriates funds for flexible services for children and families
-LC 786 Looks to the future of the system

To: the House Appropriations Committee, and Health and Human Services Committee
From: Melanie Martin-Dent, parent representative on the Children's Mental Health Bureau's System of Care Committee and the Anaconda/Deer Lodge KMA

It has taken a long time to get "off the ground", but I believe that significant progress has been made in development of the Children's System of Care in the last biennium, especially in the following areas:

Family Voice

-The majority of the members of the SOC Community Planning Committee are now family members. There is also a youth representative on the committee.

-Parents and youth are sharing their stories, successes and barriers at SOC meetings. The state agency heads are beginning to address our concerns.

-We now have a key parent partner representing us full time in Helena.

Parent and Youth Support

-Youth and parents are receiving meaningful peer support through groups offered by the grant funded KMAs.

-In partnership with NAMI MT and the Family Support Network, the SAMSHA grant has provided training to teams of parents from five communities (both funded and non-funded) to offer the NAMI Basics class to other parents to provide information, coping skills and support. Additional teams will be trained in March. Classes begin tonight in Anaconda.

-The high fidelity WrapAround process begun through the SAMSHA grant is truly family friendly and strength based will take our learning from the SAMSHA grant to more communities and maintain our gains once grant funding has ended.

-Anti-stigma work at the state and local levels have developed leadership skills and self esteem of the youth and young adults involved in the work, and have improved the climate of acceptance for our kids.

I recognize that funds are limited, but kids can't wait. Your help is needed. The full amounts in HB 65 & 66 would allow us to develop the system the way we hope to do it, with the addition of $100,000 for the family organization. If this is not possible, here are my personal priorities for funding:

1) **Funding for the development of a statewide family organization** which would be responsible for continuation of parent and youth peer support following completion of the grant, and would employ the parent coordinators to facilitate development of the family voice free of restrictions placed on state employees. $100,000 is needed.
2) **Funding for the WrapAround** process training and development of the certification process, which would continue family driven services beyond the lifetime of the federal grant. $100,000 is needed.
3) **Flexible funding to the System of Care Account (SOCA)** created by HB 98 in the 2007 legislative session to fund services deemed necessary by a KMA or WrapAround team that can not be funded by another source. Ideally these funds would available for children served by these teams who are not eligible for Medicaid or CHIP as well as children with Medicaid/CHIP.
4) **Funding for the KMAs which are not supported by the SAMSHA grant.** Several communities such as Anaconda are trying to do this work with no funding. Bozeman obtained alternate funding, but most private funders won't take on what they perceive to be a state responsibility. Kalispell and Missoula no longer have funding either. Mini-grants of $15,000-$20,000 will help; $50,000 per community would be great. If the full amount can't be funded, please consider $100,000 per year of the biennium to support the communities that are doing the work outside the federal grant.

Thank you for your support.

January 12, 2009

It is extremely difficult to put down on paper what KMA has meant to our family. Being in a rural town like Havre, there are not a whole of options when it comes to children's mental health. I currently have three children (ages 9, 12 and 13) who all have learning disabilities with two having additional issues that include ADHD, Bipolar, ODD (oppositional defiant disorder). KMA has been able to help us coordinate the different entities that deal with my children (public school, Boys and Girls Club, Behavioral Dr. in Billings, etc.) not to mention the support from KMA in the form of information and the support groups. The parents support group and the kids support group have been two of the most important aspects of KMA. With the parent support group it is helpful to be able share problems with parents who are not going to judge you or your children and to get feedback on possible solutions. It is also nice with the parent support group to be able to share successes with people who can really appreciate it. Something that is common for "regular" or "normal" children can be one of the most exciting things in the world for a parent with a child who mental health issues. It is these successes that we can share with other parents that helps keep us going. One of the highlights for my kids every week is the kids support group. These children all know that they are different, but they look forward to being with other kids that have similar problems. They also take pride in trying to help each other out.

In my opinion KMA has been a god send to families in Havre and the surrounding areas that have been able to utilize their services. I really do not know where we would be without KMA. Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Bill Lanier
(H) 406-265-1201
(W) 406-265-4113

Health and Human Services Subcommittee of the Joint Appropriations Committee
Madam Chair Teresa Henry and esteemed Committee Members:

Thank you for your service to our great state and your time today.

My name is Belinda Andreozzi DeVerniero and I am writing to you as a parent and child advocate. I am the mother of Luciano who was diagnosed with autism on February 28, 2008. We began the daunting task, right after our diagnosis of autism, of getting our son services. We soon found out that our insurance would not cover the services our son needed. Our family unit consists of six members, with one member of the family working to support all of us. We could not afford any of the therapies he so desperately needed. To do these autism therapies, that are medically necessary and evidence based, we had to find alternative funding. Luckily, the KMA came to our rescue and our son was able to participate in the P.L.A.Y. project through Easter Seals Goodwill. In September of 2008 we had another evaluation done of our son by a behavioral therapists. After lengthy testing and evaluations the therapists diagnosed our son with PDD NOS. He moved up on the Autism Spectrum, and the medical professional did not want to give him a diagnosis of autism. I have no doubt that without the money from the KMA, I would not have my son today. He would still be lining up his cars all day, not interacting with us. In six short months, not utilizing all services, or participating in others, due to cost, he still progressed tremendously.

Please support the Children of Montana by supporting the System of Care bills HB 65 & 66, and the Autism Insurance Act LC 795.

Thank you for your time and you're past support of Montana children and their families.

To the House Appropriations and Human Services Subcommittees
January 20, 2009

We are in desperate need for assistance for folks that can't obtain Medicaid or CHIP (Due to already being covered by another insurance, but they don't want to pay for the higher levels of care, i.e. residential treatment.) We need a more liberal Medicaid Waiver than what has been developed. If I'm not mistaken the Waiver, at this point, is only good for certain parts of the State. My son is Aspergers, but not DD and not strictly Mental Health. We need help. My son is 17 and soon to enter the adult system, but where does he fit in? Neither!! We treat him for his depression and anxiety, but have nothing for his Asperger behaviors.

Valerie Barstad

Madam Chair and Committee or Chairman and Committee,

For the record my name is Jill Henry and I would like the opportunity to speak for funding for Mental Health funding for children.

As the mother of 3 children with SED diagnoses, I have had my share of struggles. There have been times when I had to put off paying bills for a couple of months at a time to get the mental health care my children needed to be healthy. What a decision to make, shall I heat my home, or shall I take my child to a much needed therapy appointment. Have you ever seen a notebook you thought was yours, opened it, and found a journal entry from your 12 year-old son, saying he wants to die, and how he plans to do it?

The ignorance surrounding Children's Mental Health diagnoses is alive and well. People thinking they are bad kids, refusing to acknowledge they need help. With help, without shuffling them from place to place, placing support systems around them we can keep our children safe, and well.

Please consider funding children's mental health because all children deserve it.

Thank you.

For the record my name is Travis Henry and I want to tell you why I support funding of the Systems of Care and KMA.

I am 17 years-old, and an honor student at Helena High School. I am an actor at Helena High, as well as Grandstreet Theatre. I drive a car I bought with my own money, I love pizza, and I enjoy hanging out with my friends. But it wasn't always like this.

When I was born I had a number of problems, and my parents were told I would never walk or talk. They were told to put me in an institution. Lucky for me, my parents didn't listen, and chose to spend every dime they had demanding treatments insurance refused to pay for. When I was 6 years old, I was diagnosed with Autism and OCD. My parents made too much for Medicaid, and their insurance didn't cover therapy of any kind. I was one of those kids in between. They went into debt to get me any help they could.

What if my parents hadn't cared? What if they hadn't known better? What if they'd taken the word of the doctors and put me away? Where would I be? Please fund Children's Mental Health. Children deserve to be known for who they are, not by their mental health diagnosis.

Thank you.

For the record, my name is Morgan Henry and I am 11 years old. I want to say why I hope you fund mental health programs for children.

When I was 6 years old, I saw something really bad happen. I was too young to really understand what happened, but it scared me. It scared me for a really long time. Sometimes I'm still afraid, and sometimes I'm still sad. I went to therapy for about 4 years, and my therapist helped me work past my scary moments, and gave me tools to deal with them.

But therapy is expensive. When my mom got a new job, she didn't get Medicaid anymore and so I couldn't go to therapy anymore either. She couldn't afford $80 a week, and so I had to stop therapy. I hope my therapy didn't end too soon. I'm doing okay, but what about kids who need therapy now and their parents can't afford it? What if they have to choose between feeding their family and getting therapy?

Please help give funding to children's mental health services so that parents don't have to choose between food or heat and their children's mental health.

Thank you.

For the record, my name is Dylan Henry and I want to tell you why I support funding for Children's Mental Health.

I am in the 7th grade at Helena Middle School. I've always played sports of all kinds. I play basketball, football, soccer, baseball and hockey. I've always had a lot of friends, and liked going to school. Until last year. Last year something happened to me that I can't explain. I was afraid to go to school. I knew I had to go, it's the law, but I just couldn't make myself go. I started feeling sick when I would try to go to school, and I missed a lot of days. The school told my parents I was just a bad kid acting out. They told me I'd go to jail if I didn't start going to school. When I said I wanted to but couldn't, the school didn't understand.

My mom and dad fought for me, and my rights. They had some testing done and found out I had panic disorder and depression. Then they told the school. The school didn't believe them, but I made it through last year, one day at a time. This year, I'm much better, and I'm working hard. I've met kids like me through the KMA support group, and I know I'm not the only one who puts up with this.

We need funding for Children's Mental Health. Thank you for seeing me as a real person with needs, and not just as a bad kid.