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Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Health and Human Services  
Teresa Henry, chair  
John Esp  
Dave Lewis  
Penny Morgan  
Carolyn Pease-Lopez  
Don Roberts  
Trudi Schmidt  
David Wanzenried

Madam chair and members of the subcommittee:

My name is Mike Mayer. I am the executive director of Summit Independent Living Center in Missoula, and I appreciate the opportunity today to offer testimony for your consideration as you face the daunting task of making decisions on budgets for programs serving people with disabilities and seniors in our state. I will be brief. Both the Medicaid home and community-based service programs and the senior services provided by Area Agencies on Aging are vital for the independence, health and quality of life for people with disabilities and seniors who rely on Medicaid for their long-term care needs. Montana can take pride in the wide continuum of long-term care services that has been built through collaborative efforts by the legislature, the disability community, aging advocates, consumers, provider agencies and the state staff who administer the programs. We cannot afford to go backwards with these critical services that enable our seniors and people with disabilities to remain in their own homes and stay active in their communities. I believe you have the opportunity to fund both programs given the funding in the governor's budget and the potential availability of federal economic stimulus monies. I encourage you to seize the moment and ensure that these vital programs are adequately funded at this critical time in our state's history.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Mayer