



March 6, 2009

To: Senate Business, Labor and Economic Affairs Committee

RE: HB 114 Short Title: Clarify licensure and liability in public health emergencies

Dear Mr. Chairman Balyeat & Committee Members:

The Association of Montana Public Health Officials (AMPHO) would like to express our strong support for HB 114. We feel this legislation is needed because it allows licensed out-of-state volunteer professionals to assist Montana during a Governor declared disaster or emergency. Most importantly, it establishes procedures to recognize and register licenses, administer disciplinary sanctions, and provide limited immunity from liability to qualified volunteer professionals.

AMPHO is representative of 36 Montana counties of all sizes from very rural to the seven biggest in the state and each of those counties is aware of the limited resources we face in Montana. If this bill passed, it would give our state and county officials the ability to pull licensed professionals from other states during a Governor declared disaster or emergency. These professionals could range from medical staff to help the wounded, veterinarians to help with wounded or displaced animals, or engineers to help determine structural stability after an earthquake, just to name a few. DPHHS has worked closely with local public health officials, local and state Disaster and Emergency Services and Department of Labor and Industry throughout the drafting of this bill, and all agree that this legislation is in the best interest of Montana citizens and will strengthen our response to emergency and disaster situations.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this bill. If you have any further questions please call any of the below listed AMPHO Executive Board members:

Stephanie Nelson, Chair Gallatin County 406-582-3100/steph.nelson@galliton.mt.gov

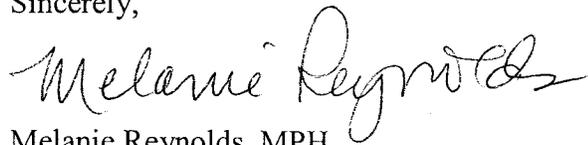
Jill-Marie Steeley, Chair-Elect Madison County 406-843-4295/madcophd@3rivers.net

Melanie Reynolds, Past Chair Lewis-Clark County [406-457-8910](tel:406-457-8910)/mreynolds@co.lewis-clark.mt.us

Linda Best, Treasurer Deer Lodge County [406-563-7863](tel:406-563-7863)/adlcph@rfwave.net

Jeanne Seifert, Secretary Dawson County [406-377-5213](tel:406-377-5213)/dchealth@midrivers.com

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melanie Reynolds". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Melanie Reynolds, MPH

Past Chair, AMPHO

Cc: Jim Murphy, DPHHS Emergency Preparedness Supervisor