EXHIBIT 10
DATE 1/21/2011
HB

January 20, 2011

Dear Honorable Chair Don Roberts and Joint Health and Human Services Committee:

I'm Linda Reinhart LCSW and proud to be from The Mental Health Center in Livingston. I'm grateful for the state funding that I personally know has helped persons find recovery and wellness through partnering with mental health professionals and each other.

Arizona slashed their mental health services and found the rate of suicide attempts, hospitalizations and law enforcement encounters all go up. Cutting preventative mental health shifts the focus from wellness to illness, from recovery to trying to put people back together after they become dangerous to self or others. Cutting mental health leads to increasing the most expensive services of responses of the emergency room, suicide attempts, incarcerations and hospital stays.

Mental Health is for all of us. It used to be one out of four families was coping with some type of mental health and/co-occurring addictions – now it is close to one out of one, and the more we realize that we are all impacted, the easier it is for persons to get past stigmas and make positive changes for mental wellness.

Montana is one of the top states in the nation for suicide with a rate of 20 per 100,000 compared to national rate of 10 per 100,000,000. Park County is one of the top five counties at triple the national rate at almost 30 per 100,000. The Mental Health Center is taking initiative to form a suicide prevention task force with key community partners. Integrated Community Mental Health Services is the key to suicide prevention and to creating lives worth living. We work hard to avoid an 'us versus them' mentality as we get further ahead and are more cost effective working as a team.

Please maintain current funding for mental health – the vital case management, counseling, day treatment, medication and maintain the change initiatives such as peer drop-in centers and Hope House. All of these necessary programs working together make the positive difference for mental wellness.

Respectfully and gratefully,

Linda Reinhart LCSW

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