

January 19, 2011

Representative Don Roberts
Chair and Committee Members
Joint Appropriations Sub-Committee on Health and Human Services

Dear Representative Roberts and Committee Members:

I am writing you in response to the proposed Legislative cuts to many of the Medicaid programs in the State of Montana, specifically the cuts to the Medicaid Waiver and Personal Assistance Services programs.

I am a recipient of a Medicaid Waiver because of a traumatic injury to my brain when I was 15 years old. I lived independently with supported living services for ten years in Helena. However, after suffering a burn injury, I was moved to a group home living situation and have lived there for almost two years. I have lost a lot of my independence because of this particular living situation. For me, this has not been a quality living experience.

I am fortunate, however, to now return to independent living by qualifying to purchase a unit of a four-plex condo being built by Habitat for Humanity. Now, more than ever, I will need the assistance provided by my Medicaid Waiver to its fullest extent. The services provided by this assistance, will allow me to live in my own home, in my own home town, and to have the support of family and friends I so desperately want and need.

If any cuts to the waiver program are enacted, I will likely have to give up my own home and have to return to the group home living situation. This would be devastating to me. I would like to believe that you and your esteemed legislative representatives will do right by the disabled population, especially those, who through no fault of their own, depend on some form of assistance to live as good of life as possible. There have to be other services or programs where excesses can be cut or eliminated. Also, take a long and hard look at waste and abuse in programs before arbitrarily making cuts or eliminations to them.

At any given moment in time, you and any of your associates could become the victim of a disabling condition and you may just need the services you have in mind to eliminate. Lastly, just because you have the power to make these cuts does not make it right or justified.

Sincerely,

MATTHEW J. PATRICK

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