



SENATE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

EXHIBIT NO. 5

DATE: 1-27-2011

BILL NO. SB 82

315 N. 25th Street, Suite 201 • Billings, MT 59101
Phone: (406) 238-6066 • Fax: (406) 238-6068
Toll Free: 1-866-275-RMHN • Website: www.rmhn.org

January 26, 2011

The Honorable Llew Jones, Chair
Senate Highways and Transportation Committee
Montana State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

RE: SB 82 Primary Seat Belt legislation

Dear Chair Jones:

I am writing on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Health Network which is a large Provider Hospital Organization of over 500 members, headquartered in Billings. Our membership includes over 260 physicians, over 240 allied providers, and seven hospitals including St. Vincent Healthcare.

Two years ago, I testified on behalf of RMHN in support of legislation which would allow law enforcement to stop vehicles in which the driver was not wearing a seat belt, primarily for that reason. Sadly, this legislation did not pass in 2009.

Tragically, in the interim, our providers and institutions have had to treat victims of accidents in which drivers and passengers who were not wearing seat belts were badly injured or killed. In many cases, these severe injuries and deaths could have been prevented had these citizens been wearing their seat belts.

Rocky Mountain Health Network strongly supports this legislation in 2011. While a primary seat belt law will not prevent all cases of negligence in the wearing of restraints, its effect will be a significant reduction in the numbers of cases, and the tragic personal and economic losses associated with accidents involving unrestrained occupants. We urge the Committee act affirmatively on SB 82.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul R. Cook MD".

Paul R. Cook, MD, MHA, CPE
President and CEO, Rocky Mountain Health Network