

AMPHO

Association of Montana Public Health Officials



Public Health

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

EXHIBIT NO. 1

DATE: 1/10/2011

BILL NO. SB 25

January 10, 2011

The Honorable Senator Terry Murphy, Chair
Members of the Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee

Senator Murphy and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Association of Montana Public Health Officials (AMPHO) strongly supports the passage of SB 25 "Provide monitoring of childhood body mass index trends" in order to gauge how Montana's children are faring in the nation's childhood obesity epidemic. Montana should join the, at least, 19 other states that use this basic public health measure in their efforts to check the life-long diseases that get their start in childhood obesity.

Beyond the fundamental need for this of this public health indicator, we support the design of SB 25 for compiling this data for the following reasons.

- **Confidentiality:** The bill requires confidential measuring and handling of data; all data will be deidentified and aggregated before submittal to any related data source.
- **Minimal and Existing Resources Needed:**
 - The design is patterned after Idaho's monitoring system, requiring only about 22% of any one grade level to be measured biennially yet still provide an epidemiologically sound measurement;
 - Uses existing on-line data aggregation resource provided by the Centers for Disease Control and builds on existing data aggregation at DPHHS.
 - Can garner heights and weights that may already be taken
- **Optional Participation:** No parent, child, or school is required to participate.
- **Direct Quality Measurement Benefits:**
 - BMI is a direct body measure, easily taken, not a self-reported survey best done by standard means.
 - There is a lack of data for the 5- to 14-year-old age group.
 - **This is not an individual health intervention program; it is a measurement.**

We express our appreciation to the Interim Committee on Child and Family Health and Human Services and Senator Kaufmann for proposing SB 25 and stand ready to make Montana's childhood obesity monitoring system a reality.

Sincerely,

Ellen Leahy, R.N., M.N.
AMPHO Legislative Co-Chair