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February 18, 2011

Senator Jason Priest, Chairman
 Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee
 State Capitol Room 317
 1301 E. Sixth Avenue
 Helena, MT 59620

PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY
 Exhibit No. 5
 Date 2/18/11
 Bill No. SB 351

Dear Senator Priest:

I am Charlie Briggs, Assistant Vice-President with Easter Seals-Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain, whose headquarters are in Great Falls. I stand in support of SB 351. We are concerned about the proposal for a five-county Medicaid managed care pilot project, which includes Cascade County and its possible impact on the access and quality of services to our state's most vulnerable citizens.

In Cascade County, our company is the seventh largest employer, with more than 250 employees. Also in the proposed pilot area, we have outlying services to eligible citizens in Choteau and Teton Counties. Last fiscal year we provided services to **1,500** people that could be significantly impacted by the state's proposed privatization of Medicaid.

We serve a wide variety of people, various age groups and service needs. In all, we administer through contracts with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services several Medicaid Home and Community Base (HCBS) waivers in three divisions: the Addictive and Mental Disorders Division, the Disability Services Division, and the Senior and Long-Term Care Division.

This includes community-based services to **adults with developmental disabilities** (*nearly 200* individuals in Cascade County alone), as well as supported living and supported employment services funded partially by the Developmental Disabilities Medicaid Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver. We provide services to **older adults, persons with development and/or physical disabilities** funded partially by Medicaid through Medicaid Waiver Services and Medallion Medical Care entity – both skilled nursing and professional home health services – and personal, in-home care, and adult day services.

Further, we provide case management for older adults and people of all ages with **physical disabilities through the Medicaid Waiver Home and Community Based Services**. We are a case management pilot site serving those with **severe and disabling mental illness** (SDMI), and we ensure hospice services are provided through Medicaid waiver slots.

Given the number of consumers and employees potentially impacted in Cascade County, our organization has a large stake in any managed care initiative and is concerned how quickly this managed care proposal has advanced.

For more than 30 years I have worked for both Democratic and Republican Administrations, and for various non-profit health and human service organizations. Back to the former Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services, I have trusted the process to seek and solicit the input and suggestions of recipients of services, the providers of services, and the general public. I regret that has not been the experience with the current Medicaid managed care initiative.

But, while the current pilot proposal has served as a catalyst, the necessity for legislative action such as SB 351 has been with us for many years. It's time now to act and to provide independent oversight of managed care and its potential positive, as well as negative, impact on our most vulnerable citizens. I urge a "do pass" today.

Finally, Easter Seals-Goodwill would welcome the opportunity to participate in any planning or advisory group for implementation of this regional pilot. If the department awards a sole source contract to oversee Medicaid Managed Care, Easter Seals-Goodwill has more than 25 years experience as a Medicaid community service provider and is well-positioned to be a viable partner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C. Briggs".

CHARLIE BRIGGS

Assistant Vice-President