

February 6, 2013

Dear Members of the House Human Services Committee:

We are in favor of ensuring that the Department of Public Health and Human Services provides sound discharge planning for patients at the Montana State Hospital and support the general purpose of HB 238. However, we are concerned that in its current form, it may cause undue delay to discharge. We would support the bill if it contained the following amendment:

"53-21-180. Discharge plan. (1) Each patient admitted as an inpatient to a mental health facility must have an individualized discharge plan developed within 10 days after admission. The discharge plan must be updated as necessary. Each individualized discharge plan must contain:

- (a) an anticipated discharge date;
- (b) criteria for discharge;
- (c) identification of the facility staff member responsible for discharge planning;
- (d) identification of the community-based agency or individual who is assisting in arranging post discharge services, including housing;
- (e) referrals for financial assistance needed by the patient upon discharge; and
- (f) other information necessary to ensure an appropriate discharge and adequate post discharge services.

(2) A discharge plan may not allow for the discharge of a patient directly into a homeless shelter or to a location that is outdoors or outside of a building, THE MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY MUST ENSURE THAT THIS REQUIREMENT DOES NOT DELAY DISCHARGE WHERE ALL OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN HAVE BEEN SATISFIED;

(3) A discharge plan that provides for discharge into a temporary housing situation must include information on the resources available to assist the patient in finding permanent housing."

Thank you.



Beth Brenneman  
Disability Rights Montana

EXHIBIT

DATE

BY