



EXHIBIT 17

DATE 4/15/13

SB 395

March 25, 2013

Montana House Human Service
Representative David Howard, Chair
Montana State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

RE: SB 395 – Medicaid Expansion Legislation

Dear Chairman Howard and Members of the Committee,

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. We support evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. As such, I am writing to ask you to support an important step toward this goal in Montana by taking full advantage of the federal funds available to provide thousands of families with the lifesaving health coverage they need through the Medicaid program. Please support Senate Bills 393 and 395.

The federal government will pay 100% of the cost of expanding access to Medicaid in the first three years, and no less than 90% of the cost beyond 2020. Doing so could save the state millions of taxpayer dollars that are currently used to treat uninsured people in emergency rooms. These savings can only be realized if the members of the Montana Legislature voice their support for participation in the Medicaid expansion.

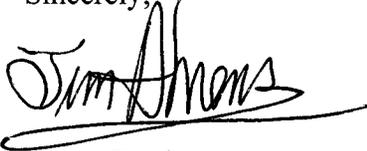
Accepting the federal dollars being offered to the State of Montana to expand our Medicaid program is critically important to our effort of eliminating cancer as a major health problem. It is estimated that more than 5,000 new cases of cancer were diagnosed and more than 2,000 Montanans lost their fight against cancer in 2012, making it the second leading cause of death in the state. ACS CAN's goal, to reduce and eliminate cancer morbidity and mortality, cannot be realized without adequate health care access.

More than 60,000 low-income Montanans would be provided the security of quality health coverage so they can see a doctor regularly, access preventive services, such as pap smears, mammograms and smoking cessation aids and get lifesaving care when they need it, without facing huge medical bills. We can also significantly reduce the number of uninsured Montanans with incomes at or below 138% of the federal poverty level (\$30,657 for a family of 4). When more Montanans have access to a regular doctor,

the state will also save millions in taxpayer dollars that are currently paying for uncompensated care in emergency rooms.

Increased coverage is the gateway to improving public health and reducing the cancer burden in Montana. ACS CAN strongly encourages you and your colleagues to accept the money that has already been set aside for Montana, to cover more people and save taxpayer dollars by fully expanding Medicaid.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Ahrens", with a horizontal line underneath it.

James F. Ahrens

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Contract Lobbyist

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