

January 21, 2013

EXHIBIT 18
DATE 1/22/13
HB Senior long term care

Dear Members of the Legislative Finance Committee,

I was a daughter of a client receiving Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), a caregiver and now a case manager for HCBS. If you could focus on any facts to assist you in making your decisions or advocacy please read below.

- 36 people on our Missoula HCBS wait list
- Currently serving 262 individuals with physical disabilities in Missoula, Ravalli and Mineral Counties.
- Average HCBS service plan is around \$18000/year
- Average cost per person in a nursing home is \$48000-60000/year
- HCBS is serving people who are living longer and living with greater degree of disability and/or illness.
- Providers have been hesitant in serving individuals with higher care needs due to low reimbursement, difficulty obtaining and retaining caregivers

One issue outside of your focus but needs to be addressed and advocated for is the level of income for those considered medically needy. These individuals receive their SSDI but then pay back a portion so that they are at the medically needy level and can obtain Medicaid. This amount is \$645 meaning that if somebody receives \$1000 in SSDI they pay back to the state \$355 (\$1000-645) leaving them to live off of \$645/month. Those that do not qualify for SSI receive \$710/month. In addition, most housing, food, LIEAP programs look at gross income so those SSDI recipients do not qualify for further assistance.

An Example:

Currently, I have 4 clients who had high paying, reputable positions but due to MS, Parkinsons and Cancer now receive a high SSDI payment. Due to their personal care needs they need Medicaid. They are over qualified for SNAP, housing assistance, Senior meal discounts, and LIEAP but are then left to live off of \$645/month. In Missoula it is difficult to find a studio for less than \$500. They would have been better off if they had never paid into the system and get the \$710 from SSI.

This could be you or I.

Thank you for your time and hard work.

Sincerely,

Cris Fleming Bloxom, BSW

Cris Fleming Bloxom, BSW

cflamingbloxom@gmail.com