

To: Representative Ron Ehli, Chair and Committee Members

**Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, 2013
Montana Legislature**

From: Richard Smith, 121 14th Ave. S. Great Falls MT 59405

Date: February 1st, 2013

RE: Concern about Medicaid rates and funding for community mental health services

Dear representative Ehli and Committee members: My name is Richard Smith. I am currently a volunteer on the Warmline, a certified NAMI support group facilitator and a certified Peer Support Specialist with the Center for Mental Health in Great Falls. I am presently doing very well in my recovery and giving back to my peers.

In 2010 I worked as a professional for the State of Montana. I was overcome with a serious mental illness and spent 67 days in the State Hospital. My life was unraveled and I did not know if recovery was possible. I lost my job due to mental illness and moved to Great Falls to live with my family. I struggled to get help with my mental health needs. I lost my Psychiatrist and had to beg a physician to continue my medications until I could find a Psychiatrist. I applied for services at the Center for Mental Health in Great Falls and discovered a 3 month waiting list. I was broke, unemployed and having many difficulties. I applied for the Montana Mental Health Plan and received financial assistance with medications, therapy and psychiatric services. I finally got a good therapist and Psychiatrist at the Center for Mental Health and my recovery began.

I am here today to attest that the Center for Mental Health has been an integral part of my recovery. I am convinced that I would have been back in the State Hospital without the services and support I have received from the Center for Mental Health. I was worried last year when I heard that the Center for Mental Health was having a financial crisis. They have been a lifeline for me and I do not know what I would do if the Center for Mental Health had to close it's doors. The Center for Mental Health provides me and many of my peers with needed services that keep us out of hospitals and in substantial recovery.

I have tremendous hope for the future. I am a tax payer again and hope to continue to progress in my career to become a mental health professional. I owe so much to the Center for Mental Health.

Dear Sir,
I am writing to you regarding the matter of _____
