

My name is Stan Danielson. I'm a farmer from Antelope, Montana. I drove 520 miles to be here to speak against closing the Montana Developmental Center in Boulder.

My son, Cody, and I have 20 years' experience with the Montana mental health system, including mental health centers, group homes and now MDC.

From the time he was born until he turned 6 months old, Cody screamed himself to sleep. He has always had problems. He is an adult now and he lacks executive and cognitive skills. He has no sense of action and consequence. MDC has figured out that he has Fetal Alcohol Effect.

At age 8 or 9, I had him at Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch. I brought him home for awhile. Then he was in a group home in Billings. They physically isolated him and didn't communicate with him...when I went there, they didn't want to let me in the door. I got him out of there and he was so withdrawn. It took a Butte group home 6 months to get him back to where he was communicating again.

He left there after he graduated from Butte High. I brought him home to the farm, but there was no therapy or services available, and after 6 months, he started acting out and running away. He ended up in jail in Glasgow. My son spent his 22nd birthday in jail. Mental health people had been telling me he needed to be at MDC but there was no way to get him there until the court acted. He is now safely at MDC.

MDC provides my son and all the clients with individualized treatment plans, intensive therapy, medical/dental/vision care, 24-hour supervision, and recreation opportunities. They do a great job of serving the clients who need that level of care.

Some legislators are upset over the cost-benefit of the services provided at MDC. How can duplicating these services in every group home be more cost effective? My son and others need psychotropic drugs that have to be administered by an RN. Will every group home have an RN? They're not there

now. Will local law enforcement be tasked with security, or will special security be needed? At what cost to taxpayers? We already have this at MDC.

Regarding placements to group homes — good luck! Eligible clients are waiting now and can wait for months. There are not openings for clients. Placement depends upon whether or not the home can provide the necessary services to the eligible client.

Cody has been on the waiting list for community-based services since October 2013. It is basically a bidding process. Only 2 providers have even considered him. One said his behaviors were too hard to manage. The other said he didn't fit in with their cliental.

In the discussion about this bill, safety was presented as an issue. My son is at MDC. I know he is safe, he feels safe. He wouldn't be there if I didn't feel he was safe.

Sure, there have been "incidents" — remember, there are all types of disability involved. Imagine how frustrating it is to be developmentally disabled. They have feelings and, I dare say, feelings that are more intense than most of us. Incidents and disputes won't disappear and may occur more frequently in a community setting that lacks proper treatment and oversight.

Montana needs MDC. MDC is no doubt the most cost-effective way to serve people with serious disabilities in the long run. Closing MDC would be unconscionable. It would hurt so many people.

Thank you.