



**OPPORTUNITY  
RESOURCES, INC**

*Supporting Individuals with Disabilities Since 1955*

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Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Dear Governor Bullock,

My name is Gwen Gardner and I am a Case Manager for Developmentally Disabled Adults in Kalispell. I am deeply concerned by your proposed choices of Programs to cut from the Department of Public Health and Human Services. We all understand budget cuts and tightening the belt, but to cut entire programs for Children, the Disabled and the Elderly is excessive and frankly dangerous for the people who use them to live productive and successful lives.

Many people have no understanding as to what Case Managers do, so they think cutting that service would be an easy way to save money. However, we actually provide an essential link between the services that are out there and the clients who need them. We bridge the gap between Providers and the people who need the care. We juggle budgets and fill out paperwork and call resources, schedule meetings, monitor the Cost Plans, work with other services in the area to find Grants or Scholarships, help clients and families navigate Social Security and Medicaid. We also monitor the Providers of Services to make sure they are providing the services they say they are, that they are billing appropriately and that the services are what our clients actually need. We explain to our clients and their parents what resources are available and how they can access them, then we set that up and follow through to make sure it actually happens.

This could mean Personal Care Services to help our clients with personal hygiene, bathing, dressing, meal prep, laundry and cleaning. It could mean finding a Day Service they can attend in order to learn social skills as well as work skills. It might mean a Job Coach that assists them out in the community at a local clothing store or fast food restaurant to work at a job that brings them a paycheck and puts money back into the funds that they are drawing from, like Social Security and Medicaid. It could be Supported Living, that assists people with money management, bill paying, shopping, setting up necessary medical appointments, etc.

These programs help people live their lives, give them a sense of purpose and provide essential support without which they wouldn't be able to live productive lives in the community. If you cut these services we are taking a step back towards institutionalization, as without these services many families would not be able to keep their loved ones at home and many disabled people currently living in the community would have to return to a more sheltered environment.

I am urging you to look for another solution to the budget issue. Let us show that we care about our Children, the Disabled and the Elderly and are not willing to sacrifice them in the name of money and budget cuts.

Sincerely,  
Gwen Gardner  
Case Manager

**Legislative Finance Committee  
Oct. 4, 2017  
Exhibit 13**