

January 17, 2023

Public Comment for House Bill 2 – Health & Human Services

**Funding for Mental Health Services**

- “The state is facing a mental health crisis – and one of the main barriers to access to care is a lack of providers. We need to pay our providers a competitive rate, or else Montana will never be able to address the state’s mental health care deserts.

The Governor commissioned a study that proved in order for MT to retain health care workers, the state needed to dramatically increase provide rates – the state simply isn’t paying these critical workers the wages they deserve. The Governor ignored his own study – and is only proposing ONE THIRD of what the study recommended.

The state needs to fund 100% of the suggested rates from the Guidehouse study.”

-Daisy Carl

- “We need to pay Mental Health providers a competitive wage to attract and retain workers in Montana for this critical need. Support the full amount for wages that was proposed by Gov. Gianforte in the Guidehouse Study. Thank you for your consideration and service.”

-Mindy Ferrell

- “The state is facing a mental health crisis – and one of the main barriers to access to care is a lack of providers. We need to pay our providers a competitive rate, or else Montana will never be able to address the state’s mental health care deserts.

The Governor commissioned a study that proved in order for MT to retain health care workers, the state needed to dramatically increase provide rates – the state simply isn’t paying these critical workers the wages they deserve. The Governor ignored his own study – and is only proposing ONE THIRD of what the study recommended.

The state needs to fund 100% of the suggested rates from the Guidehouse study.”

-Don Gardner

- “I support adding funds to help alleviate the health crisis facing this state- Including the physical and mental health of children, adults, and seniors. I support funding the CSCT, additional support for mental health workers, and full Medicaid access for all including tribal communities.”

-Ryan Kiefer

- “We need to fund any and all legislation involving mental health.”

-Margaret Stadler

January 17, 2023

- “Montana has a mental health care crisis. We need to pay our health providers a competitive rate to alleviate this crisis.”

-Bonita J Reishus

- “Regarding funding for mental health costs: we have to pay enough to get the quality providers we need.”

-Laura Reynolds

- “The state is facing a mental health crisis – and one of the main barriers to access to care is a lack of providers. We need to pay our providers a competitive rate, or else Montana will never be able to address the state’s mental health care deserts.

The Governor commissioned a study that proved in order for MT to retain health care workers, the state needed to dramatically increase provide rates – the state simply isn’t paying these critical workers the wages they deserve. The Governor ignored his own study – and is only proposing ONE THIRD of what the study recommended.

The state needs to fund 100% of the suggested rates from the Guidehouse study.”

-Terri L Nelson

### **School Mental Health Services**

- “I was an elementary teacher at Noxon Public Schools for 28 years. I definitely know that children need fully funded mental health care support in schools. Please support this bill.”

-Bonita Reishus

- “Comprehensive School and Community Treatment. Montana families and children need a fully funded mental health support in schools. It was obvious to me, when working for a Montana Tribal Health and when my adopted children were in school, that OPI is not equipped or serious about caring for school children’s mental health or behavioral health needs.”

-June Ellestad

- “It is extremely important that we fully fund school mental health services for our young people. Early intervention is key to successful mitigation of mental and behavioral issues. Please support this part of the Appropriations Bill. Thank you!”

-Donna Martin

### **Childcare Funding**

January 17, 2023

- “The childcare shortage and childcare affordability crisis are hurting Montana families and our economy Some families are paying as much for childcare as they are for housing.

We need to cap the cost of childcare for MT families and revise the reimbursement structure to bring more stability to childcare providers – like HB 238 calls for.”

-Don Gardner

- “Parents are struggling immensely to keep up with the cost of living. Times have changed; childcare is incredibly expensive. If we want adults in the workplaces, we need to supplement childcare. It speaks volumes to the world knowing that the United States is one of the only developed countries without free childcare.”

-Lorene K Bishop

- The childcare shortage and childcare affordability crisis is hurting Montana families and our economy Some families are paying as much for childcare as they are for housing.

We need to cap the cost of childcare for MT families and revise the reimbursement structure to bring more stability to childcare providers – like HB 238 calls for.

-Terri L Nelson

- “Funding for CSCT: Montana children need this help.”

-Laura Reynolds

- “I am writing to express my support for JPB: Funding for Childcare. Affordable, quality childcare is a concern for families and for the economy. Currently Montana is facing a childcare crisis. We need to both cap the cost of childcare and provide fair, equitable financial support to childcare providers. Both of these are called for in HB 238. “

-June Ellestad

### **Medicaid Funding & Eligibility**

- “I am writing to express my concerns regarding Medicaid eligibility rules. DPHHS needs to restore continuous eligibility. They need to take a commonsense approach to redetermining eligibility reequipments. The current plan could kick 43,000 Montanans off their health care plan and will disproportionately affect Tribal health care services.”

-June Ellestad

January 17, 2023

- “DPHHS and Governor Gianforte have made it easier to kick people off their health care by changing the Medicaid eligibility rules, which will disproportionately affect Tribal health care services. DPHHS needs to restore continuous eligibility and redetermine eligibility requirements in a slower and more responsible way. The current plan for changing eligibility is irresponsible and could remove health care for over 43,000 Montanans.”

-Steven Shapero

- “I am writing to express my support for adequate support for Montana's Health System. The Governor commissioned the Guidehouse study, however, his budgeted ignores his stud. in that the funding he is proposing for paying critical care providers is 1/3 of the recommended amount. To retain care providers and to pay the workers their deserved wage the state must pay the amounts recommended by the Governor's study.”

-June Ellestad

### **Disability Services**

- “My name is Shyla Patera. I am employed by and representing North Central Independent Living Services, Inc. (NCILS)in Black Eagle, Montana supports the decision packages brought forth by the DETD division. We also support and thank for the division and department for opening the VR categories of service impacted by the Order of Selection which opens up possibilities that more of us with disabilities can get employment assistance, assistive technology assistance, services from the older blind program and both divisions of VR and BLVS. NCILS also asks that all citizens with disabilities seeking employment services are given opportunities to explore and pursue competitive integrated employment opportunities with prevailing wages and inclusive environments.

NCILS also recognizes the value of transportation coordination and the transportation coordinator housed in DPHHS/DETD.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Montana's independent living community of Which My Center, North Central Independent Living Services, Inc is a part Centers for Independent living are cross disability organizations that provide five core services so that people with disabilities can live independently with or without supports in our Montana communities. Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony on the DETD division. I ask you each to remember that DTD & DPHHS are often for many Montanans with disabilities vital infrastructure and provide services so that we can work live and play in our Montana communities.”

-Shyla Paterna