

January 18, 2023

Public Comment for House Bill 2 – Health & Human Services

**Nursing Home Provider Rates**

- “Montana needs to make the wages of Nursing Home providers competitive. They do some of the most difficult work on our behalf.”

-Donna L Martin

**Childcare Funding**

- “The shortage and affordability of childcare is hurting Montana families. Some families are paying more for childcare than for their mortgage. We need to put a cap on the cost of childcare for MT families. Please vote for additional support for childcare and Montana families.”

-Ellen Sullivan

- “I support funding for childcare. It is our responsibility to provide for the future of our state...our children. In order to have a vibrant economy, Montana workers need adequate childcare without worries.”

-Paula Darko Hensler

- “The state of Child Care in Montana is atrocious. We need to provide adequate funding to enable more providers and places for children in quality facilities.”

-Donna L Martin

- “Montana has a crisis of childcare affordability; this is detrimental for our economy.”

-Shelley Eisenrich

- “Childcare costs are much too high and causing hardships on families. Support this bill to revise the reimbursement structure to childcare providers to help stabilize childcare in Montana.”

-Bonita J Reishus

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### **Medicaid Funding & Eligibility**

- “Support continuation of Medicaid eligibility funding. Rural Healthcare providers in low-income communities like Libby need it.”

-Paula Darko Hensler

- “I am concerned that many Montana citizens are going to be denied Medicaid coverage and will be irresponsibly removed from eligibility for such. We should fund to restore services to these people. It is inhumane not to do so.”

-Michele Holeman

### **Disability Services**

- “My name is Sara Streeter. I live in Missoula. I have a degenerative eye condition and am currently enrolled in the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind program. I spent 34 years as an accounting and finance professional, but my eye disease has left me unable to read print, drive a car, and a host of other things.

Right now, I need help from Blind and Low Vision Services (BLVS) in the form of orientation and mobility (O&M) training so I can safely navigate with a white cane. Crossing a busy intersection is frightening because I often can't make out the walk signals. Turn signals on cars aren't clear so I can't make out driver intent. While my white cane should signal to drivers that I'm visually impaired, it's really up to me to stay safe.

That's where I need help from BLVS. However, the new O&M specialist here in Missoula is just starting her own training to become certified to teach O&M. This will take around 18 months. There is another O&M trainer here who is recently certified, but when I asked the BLVS program head here about contracting with her for my training, I was told there wasn't any money for that.

I need to be able to cross streets safely now, not in two years. My only alternative at the moment is to pay for the service out of my own pocket. This isn't acceptable. I respectfully ask you to significantly increase the funding for the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind program.”

-Sara S Streeter