

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act (H) Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services - 2021-01-08 08:00 AM

Position: Opponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: disability rights montana

Name: Beth Brenneman

Email: beth@disabilityrightsmt.org

Phone: (406) 431-1433

City, State: Helena

Written Statement: We are very concerned about any move to go back in the past for the starting point for the budget. Although efforts were made to reverse the 2017 cuts to psychiatric services, developmental disability services and senior and long term care services last session, they were not fully restored. All of these programs are still in a deficit from those cuts and the absence of rate increases during those years. Current medicaid rates do not reflect the cost of doing business, and our community system - which serves the vast majority of people with disabilities - will not fully recover if we do not have additions to the current budget for these services. Any cuts, or keeping the status quo, will not fix our tremendous problems in our community disability services system in Montana.

Files:

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Position: Opponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Beaverhead Co Mental Health Local Advisory Council

Name: Katherine Buckley-Patton

Email: gaelicgrannie@gmail.com

Phone: (406) 660-1637

City, State: Dillon

Written Statement: Beaverhead County residents with mental health and substance use challenges were seriously compromised when legislative cuts eliminated access to critical programs in the 2019 budget. Despite subsequent outreach efforts, many of these individuals lost Medicaid coverage, were unable to continue on needed medication, and no longer had access to treatment and case management service. These public health cuts were destructive when they originally occurred and reverting to 2019 budget levels for DPHHS in the upcoming state fiscal year merely exacerbates the many problems we've dealt with since then and compromises any progress we've made to date. These programs and providers need fully funded at acceptable and competitive levels. Montanans deserve it.

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Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

Name: Travis Hoffman

Email: thoffman@summitlc.org

Phone: (406) 396-8159

City, State: MISSOULA

Written Statement: My name is Travis Hoffman. I'm the advocacy coordinator at Summit Independent Living. We are one of four Centers for Independent Living in Montana who provide information and referral as well as individual services and work on a systemic level to improve service systems and access for people with all types of disabilities. I am also a person living with a disability who utilizes Medicaid services to be able to live in the community and that allow me to work, shop, and recreate.

We support House Bill 2. In beginning its analysis, I respectfully ask the Committee to begin with the 2021 approximate base budget. It will make it really hard to untangle this budget if it starts from a position that does not reflect current expected expenditures. This will put Governor Gianforte and DPHHS in a horrible position to provide the services that Montanans, including myself, need to be active, contributing members in our communities.

Montana's disability service systems are still struggling from a combination of the effects of the 2017 budget cuts and the challenges of the current pandemic. Please help ensure that these service systems do not go backwards and can better meet the needs of Montana individuals and families who rely upon them.

Thanks,
Travis Hoffman

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Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

Name: Carmen Crum

Email: ccrum@180com.net

Phone: (406) 652-5443

City, State: BILLINGS

Written Statement: My name is Carmen S. Crum and I am a Board member of the Montana Association of Community Disability Services (MACDS) as well as CEO for RSD, Inc. I am writing you today with a significant concern for people with intellectual challenges across of Montana. My primary concern relates to the starting point motions on DPHHS and base cuts.

MACDS is a professional organization comprised of thirty-three community-based organizations in Montana that provide a variety of critical services and supports including but not limited to residential services, employment, and day activities primarily to children and adults with developmental disabilities. The primary mission of MACDS is to support member agencies to provide extraordinary services to people with disabilities in Montana.

I have heard that the committee may be considering moving the DPHHS base budget from 2021 Appropriations to 2019 Actuals. This would be devastating for the people we serve and would result in significant cuts to services that are essential to those served across Montana with intellectual disabilities. . Overall, we experienced substantial cuts in 2017 and 2018 and have not yet been made whole. The people we serve and our services cannot withstand any additional cuts to the services they need so desperately for survival.

On behalf of the vulnerable population we serve, I would respectfully ask for your reconsideration on this issue and please reach out to me as I can be a resource to you and our communities. I am happy to discuss the impact that the recent cuts have had on us and am available to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter.

Respectfully,

Carmen Crum, CEO
RSD, Inc.

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Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: SEIU 775

Name: Jacquie Helt Montana State Director

Email: Jacquie.Helt@seiu775.org

Phone: (406) 544-9682

City, State: Helena MT

Written Statement: SEIU 775 represents long-term healthcare workers in communities across Montana including nursing homes, group homes, and client homes. The clients our members care for receive services in SLTC, behavior health, and other DSD programs.

While we support House Bill 2, we urge the Committee to begin with the 2021 base budget. It is our belief the budget needs to reflect current expected expenditures. These services were drastically cut in the 2017 Session(s) and are still attempting to recover from those cuts, not to mention the impacts from CV19. We owe it to Montana families to pass a budget that is values-based and adequately funds services for some of our most vulnerable populations.

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Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: NAMI Montana

Name: Matthew John Kuntz

Email: matt@namimt.org

Phone: (406) 443-7871

City, State: Helena, MT

Written Statement: My name is Matt Kuntz. I'm the Executive Director of NAMI Montana. We are a grassroots organization that support, educates and advocates for Montanans who live with mental illness and their families.

We support House Bill 2. In beginning its analysis, NAMI Montana respectfully asks the Committee to begin with the 2021 approximate base budget. It will make it really hard to untangle this budget if it starts from a position that does not reflect current expected expenditures. This will put Governor Gianforte and DPHHS in a horrible position to provide the services that Montanans desperately need.

Montana's mental health care system is struggling from a combination of the effects of the 2017 budget cuts and the challenges of the current pandemic. Please help this system and the Montana families that rely upon it.

Thank you,
Matt Kuntz,

Executive Director
NAMI Montana