

From: Jim Fitzgerald <jimf@intermountain.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 12:56 PM
To: Wilkinson, Kris <KWilkinson@mt.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Legislative Finance Committee – Education Subcommittee meeting

High Kris,

Sorry this is late, if you can pass it on to the committee that would be great.

Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address your committee today. I appreciate your time and attention to this important matter. I'd also like to thank Superintendent Arntzen and her staff, particularly Mr. Bailey, as well as Director Hogan and her team at DPHHS. Without their willingness to listen, communicate and do the much-needed research, Montana youth may have been denied the educational services they need, and the state is obligated to provide.

Intermountain provides fully accredited educational programming year around to seriously emotionally disturbed children treated in our residential program in Helena and Kalispell. Our very disturbed children (4 – 12 years old) come from every corner of Montana and treatment services are paid for by Medicaid. For nearly 25 years, the OPI has reimbursed Intermountain for the cost of providing education and special education services to our children. Cuts to these education reimbursements last year has made a significant impact to our operating budget. Medicaid fees do not cover the cost of providing treatment and Intermountain cannot absorb unreimbursed costs for the clients public education as well.

Again, I thank you for your committee's time, and for the partnership we received from OPI and DPHHS. It is time to fix this problem so all Montana's kids have the same opportunity for the future.

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