



Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee

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63rd Montana Legislature

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June 26, 2014

Dear Sen. Tester,

The Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee has been studying ways to reduce prescription drug abuse, misuse, and diversion in Montana. As part of this study, we've been taking a close look at the Montana Prescription Drug Registry and similar drug monitoring programs in other states.

Montana has developed its registry primarily with the assistance of federal Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program grants. While the money has been extremely helpful in getting the program off the ground, initial funding was not sufficient to establish an easy-to-use database or one that allows information to be shared with other states. Continued work is needed on improvements that will make the registry more useful for health care providers. And until providers use the registry more extensively, it will fall short of its potential as a tool for reducing prescription drug abuse and misuse.

The only other source of funding for Montana's registry right now is a \$15 fee on prescribers and pharmacists. That fee is set to expire in 2015, unless the Legislature extends it. Montana has not yet devoted any of its own tax dollars to the prescription drug registry.

Many federal grants require state matching funds, but that has not been a requirement for obtaining the Harold Rogers PDMP grants. Our committee would support development of a federal funding source that requires states to provide matching funds. We believe that states would willingly add their dollars to federal dollars in order to make their prescription drug monitoring programs more effective in addressing the far-reaching problem of prescription drug abuse.

We would encourage you and other members of Montana's congressional delegation to support state prescription drug monitoring efforts by creating additional federal grants that include a requirement for state matching funds. On behalf of the committee, I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Sen. Dave Wanzenried
Presiding Officer