

October 21, 2016

The Honorable Steve Bullock
Governor, State of Montana
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT, 59620-0801

Dear Governor Bullock:

The Boulder Transition Advisory Committee (BTAC), composed of area business leaders, citizens and elected officials was created to address the transition challenges created by the pending closure of the Montana Developmental Center (MDC) – Boulder's largest and long-time employer. Through BTAC's Repurposing Committee, we have been working diligently on envisioning the use of the MDC's campus following its closure. We appreciate Mr. Dan Villa's participation in nearly every meeting of this committee as well as many BTAC meetings. Despite his hectic schedule, he was always available to us – keeping us apprised of the administration's activities and responding to our questions. His cooperation has been commendable.

We are impressed with the work of the MDC Transition Council and with the Department of Public Health and Human Services in complying with the provisions of SB 411. Despite limitations of time and money, good progress has been in transitioning MDC clients to community-based settings.

However, as we looked at options for repurposing the facility, whether for state uses or for private uses, it has been very difficult. We believe there will still be residents at MDC when the campus is scheduled to be "repurposed". Despite all of the great accomplishments, the remaining tasks are daunting and we just don't see how they can be accomplished by June 30th, 2017. There are still many clients to be placed and challenges with the providers accepting them. The absence of a facility of a last resort is a concern for everyone – families, providers, clients and the communities. And, there have been unanticipated challenges with trying to lease compliant residences for state-operated group homes. This may necessitate the construction of state-operated group homes – something with which our community may be able to help. But, this all takes time...more time that is currently available.

As we sit through meetings of the MDC Transition Council, we know that everyone wants what is best for the clients and that we are all moving in that direction. But, we are all rushed ... too rushed...to finish our task well. I say "our", because the Boulder community feels very much a part of this – and is concerned with the MDC residents as well as with Boulder's future.

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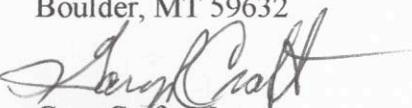
Governor Bullock - to accommodate these concerns, we recommend that the Secure Transition Facility be approved as a necessary part of the continuum of care and that MDC remain open and efforts continue to satisfy all of the dictates of SB 411 for up to an additional two years. We believe this recommendation is in the best interests of the MDC residents, individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, the communities and the providers. This will allow the spirit and intent of SB 411 to be accomplished – even if just a bit later than originally intended.

We would hope, of course, that mid-way through the next biennium, the future state use of the MDC campus would be made known to the community so proper repurposing of the MDC campus could commence – whether government or private.

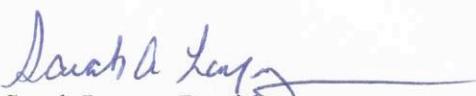
We are hopeful that the Administration will seriously entertain this recommendation. The community, of course, would be willing to assist as needed.

Sincerely,


Drew Dawson, Chair
Boulder Transition Advisory Committee
PO Box 1255
Boulder, MT 59632


Gary Craft, Mayor
City of Boulder


Bob Mullen, Chair
Jefferson County Commissioners


Sarah Layng, President
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