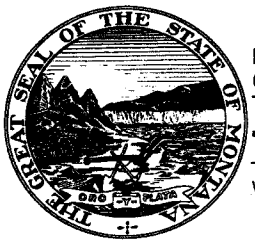
EXHIBIT 9
DATE 2-19-07
SB HB 687

# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



BRIAN SCHWEITZER
GOVERNOR

JOAN MILES
DIRECTOR

## STATE OF MONTANA

www.dphhs.mt.gov

**DPHHS Testimony on HB 687 for Extending Well Child Exam Coverage to 7 years of age**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am Jo Ann Dotson, a nurse at the state health department and chief of the Family and Community Health Bureau. We provide services and programs for infants, children, women and their families.

On behalf of the Department of Public Health and Human Services, I encourage you to pass HB 687. The extension of well child exam coverage to the age of seven years promotes children's health and development; and is as important as treating children's diseases.[1] The American Academy of Pediatrics well child schedule recommends fourteen exams by seven years of age. The well child schedule starts at newborn, then bimonthly till the age of six months, and tri-monthly till the age of two, and yearly till the age of six.

Health insurance coverage is a key factor associated with access to care. Uninsured children are four times more likely to have unmet health needs as compared to those who are insured.[2] In addition, 2.7 million children in the United States delayed seeking medical care because of the cost.[2] Lack of access to health care can lead to delaying treatment for health problems which can lead to more serious conditions and longer more expensive treatments.[2] A study conducted by HRSA, Health Resources and Services Administration, found that in 1998 nearly 23 percent of the children in the United states did not receive the recommended well child visits till the age of 18.[3]

HB 687 would extend the exemption from insurance plan deductibles through the age of 7 years, which would be inclusive of immunization expenses for kindergarten or grade 1 entry. The vaccine cost from birth to 2 years is $1,003 and for kindergarten or first grade entry is $203. These costs do not include the administration or overhead charges by the health care provider. The Montana Population Estimate Summary for 2007, completed for the CDC, indicates the number of children in Montana who may be insured and are not eligible for federally provided vaccine between the ages of 3 and 7 years is approximately 30,345.

In summary, mandating well child care coverage to the age of seven will eliminate the barriers of lack of coverage, cost, increase the percentage of children receiving well child exams and immunizations by the age of 7 and provide more opportunities for the health care provider to teach health prevention, identify health related problems, and establish a medical home. Thus, more of Montana's children will receive the necessary medical care and preventive service that they need to grow up healthy.

**Date:** 01/17/2007
**Hearing Room:** 152
**Hearing Time:** 3 PM
**Committee:** (H) Human Services

---

[1] Schor, Edward L. MD (2004).Rethinking Well-Child Care. *Pediatrics. 114 (1)*, 210-216.
[2] Simpson, G, Bloom, B, Cohen, RA, & Parsons, PE (1997). Access to Health Care Part 1: Children. *Vital and Health Statistics, 10 (196)*, 1-28.