



Draft Testimony for Craig Aasved

Interim Education Finance Subcommittee

April 23, 2020

11:00 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee. My name is Craig Aasved (spell). I am the CEO of Shodair Children's Hospital. Shodair provides a continuum of psychiatric health care for Montana youth ages 3-18, including residential treatment. Last year we treated youth from 44 Montana counties. 99% of our patients are Montana residents.

I appreciate the work that the Office of Public Instruction has done to identify the gap in payment for education for students receiving residential treatment. For years we believed that that payment was included in the Medicaid rates. We now know that is incorrect. There has been no funding provided for education for students in Montana residential treatment facilities. This is a serious inequity for Montana students and a significant financial burden on treatment facilities, including Shodair.

Last year the cost for education services for our students was almost \$350,000. Those expenses were born by our foundation, as it has been in previous years. This is not a sustainable method of funding. Additionally, it is not equitable with funding provided through OPI for education of all other Montana public school students. We are committed to providing a high-quality education for students, but this is a significant financial burden.

I urge you to look for solutions to address this funding gap for Montana kids moving forward.

Thank you.