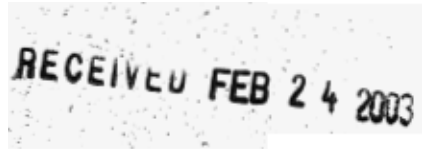




**ITEM 118-2701-R0103 ATTACHMENT**



3940 Rimrock Road  
Billings, Montana  
59102-0199  
406-655-5600  
Fax 406-655-5656

February 17, 2003

*Corporate  
Churches*

Chancellor Ronald P. Sexton  
Montana State University — Billings  
1500 North 30<sup>th</sup> Street  
Billings, MT 59101-0298

Billings  
American Lutheran  
Atonement Lutheran  
Bethlehem Lutheran  
First English Lutheran  
King of Glory Lutheran  
Lutheran Church of the  
Good Shepherd  
Messiah Lutheran  
Peace Lutheran

Re: College of Allied Health Professions

Dear Chancellor Sexton:

I offer this letter in strong support to the MSU-Billings effort to establish a College of Allied Health Professions. You and your staff are to be commended for your efforts to support the development of health care careers in Montana and for your current partnership efforts with our local health care providers including St. John's Lutheran Ministries.

Absarokee  
Immanuel Lutheran

Columbus  
St. James Lutheran

Hardin  
First American Lutheran

Harlowton  
American Lutheran

Joliet  
Joliet Lutheran

Laurel  
Our Saviors Lutheran

Lavina  
American Lutheran

Lewistown  
Zion Lutheran

Melville  
Melville Lutheran

Miles City  
First Lutheran

Red Lodge  
Messiah Lutheran

Roundup  
Zion Lutheran

Ryegate  
Grace Lutheran

Shepherd  
Emmanuel Lutheran

Health Care is the number one industry in Yellowstone County with some 30% of Montana's current professional health care workers located here. Deaconess Billings Clinic is the largest and St. Vincent Healthcare is the third largest employer within our service region. St. John's serves as the thirteenth largest employer in Yellowstone County. Even with this concentration of health care workers and expertise, we face a severe shortage of qualified candidates for a myriad of health care positions and the shortage is only predicted to become worse. As we look at our communities located in central and eastern Montana we also find that the local health care provider is often their key economic driver. These communities are also reporting severe shortages of qualified candidates and are often forced to seek educational training outside our state at costs significantly higher than would be experienced within a Billings based College of Allied Health. The provision of health care is both one of our greatest challenges and one of our greatest opportunities as we focus on the economic development of Montana.

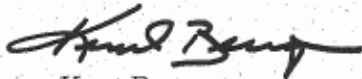
While MSU-Billings offers a wide variety of allied health programs, these programs are not always working in concert with each other. The use of faculty, and other critical resources, could be enhanced by housing a single College under the auspices of a Dean who would ensure that resources are maximized and that the College was ever responsive to the rapidly changing nature of health care today. From my review of the proposal, it appears that the efficient use of existing resources becomes the program's foundation.

I think it is also important to note the new College would also enhance the opportunities for MSU-Billings to partner with local health care providers in the area of potential joint faculty/staff appointments and the use of important clinical sites and internships. This can only strengthen the current partnerships between all of us.

Montana State University Billings is uniquely positioned, in partnership with local providers, to take a leadership role in the development of health care professions. We expect that a new College would facilitate the collaboration between programs and the articulation from 2-year to 4-year to graduate level education. Increased opportunities for research and grant opportunities would be realized. I cannot possibly fathom why this request will not be received enthusiastically on behalf of everyone involved.

Lastly, the real win is on behalf of the State of Montana. Health Care is great economic development. The fact that the health of Montana citizens will be greatly enhanced can only make this Montana's next logical step in the development of health education.

Sincerely,



Kent Burgess  
President & CEO