

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

BRIAN SCHWEITZER
GOVERNOR



JOHN BOHLINGER
LT. GOVERNOR

March 18, 2005

David Oaks, Director
MindFreedom
Support Coalition International
P.O. Box 11284
Eugene, OR 97440

Dear Mr. Oaks,

Thank you for your recent correspondence to my office and recommendations. I, too, care about the human rights of individuals, including those needing services in the mental health system. Accessible and open government is one of the priorities of my administration. However, both state and federal law require personnel matters be handled internally, protecting the privacy rights of the individual. That is the only comment I will make regarding your concerns and recommendations regarding Mr. Haire.

At one time, Montana did have a strong consumer organization that advised the state's mental health system. When that organization disbanded, the state made a commitment to seat consumers and family members on advisory boards that make recommendations to executive branch agencies that administer mental health programs. Both the Mental Health Oversight Advisory Council and the Children's System of Care Planning Committee have a majority representation of consumers and family members. The Governor's Advisory Council of Disabilities, which includes those with mental disabilities, has a majority of consumer members.

We have heard from individuals and their family members who believed they received good and appropriate care at the Montana State Hospital. Those reports balance what you and your organization have heard. I appreciate your interest in Montana and our citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Schweitzer", with a stylized flourish at the end.

BRIAN SCHWEITZER
Governor