

January 29, 2016

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my support for continuing the ongoing work being done in Weston County by our local Prevention Task Force, which has been spearheaded for several years by Weston County's Community Prevention Professional, Kristi Lipp.

Although changes implemented in the Prevention Management Organization of Wyoming two years ago presented some challenges to the committed individuals that actively participate in the Task Force created by Lipp several years ago, I believe we have transitioned ourselves completely to those changes and again ready to demonstrate the type of progress we had historically made in our community since the local prevention effort was launched by Lipp.

The majority of the gains we made in prevention occurred prior to two years ago as a result of this transition, but I can assure you as one of the community's more active participants in those efforts that our group is excited to move forward under the present model and began doing so vigorously in the last quarter of 2015.

That is why I urge to continue under the present structure and to ensure that funding and other resources are maintained at present levels. More changes in either at this point would be counter-productive, and due to a combination of the ever-present challenges that confront prevention organizations in rural communities like ours and a continued struggle the communities of Weston County face to establish consistent and reliable mental health services, such changes could be catastrophic to our efforts.

We have made great strides in Weston County since the inception of the Prevention Task Force—the number of smoke free businesses has increased exponentially, our community's awareness of the problems associated with tobacco, drugs and alcohol is at an all time high, and we've been particularly successful with programs that educate and inform youth and get them involved in spreading the prevention message elsewhere in the community.

We have also demonstrated the ability to serve the community greatly in time of crisis, and the response of our Task Force members to a suicide problem that had grown rapidly helped stem that tide a few years ago.

In short, our Task Force has produced significant value for the community of Weston County, and while changes in state level organization have temporarily stalled our efforts at time, we have always been able to make the appropriate adjustments and continue to move the effort forward.

We accomplished that recently in response to some organizational changes at PMO, and are poised to take substantial steps forward again, and for that reason I plead that you continue with the current structure and level of funding and other resources that is being provided. To do otherwise would force us into another period of transition, and decrease our ability to produce meaningful results for our community.

Thank you,

Robert A. Bonnar
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