



January 6, 2010

James H. Rimmer, Ph.D.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center
on Recreational Technologies and Exercise Physiology
RERC Rectech
University of Illinois at Chicago
1640 West Roosevelt, Suite 712
Chicago, IL 60608

Dear Dr. Rimmer:

I am writing to confirm that the Montana Disability and Health Program has adopted and is using the AIMFREE instruments in a collaborative problem-solving approach to develop action plans for rapid and cost-effective improvements in the accessibility of recreation and fitness venues in our state. We are using this approach as our current standard of practice in this area and look forward to continued collaboration to further refine the approach in the future.

Through the use of the participatory action research (PAR) method conceptualized in the literature by RERC Rectech regarding the development and validation of the instrument (AIMFREE), as well as accessibility of health clubs for people with disabilities, the Montana Disability and Health Program now has a framework for future studies similar to the one recently completed here at the University of Montana called Accessibility Ambassador Assessments of Fitness Centers in a Rural State: Identifying Physical Activity Options and Barriers for People with Physical Disabilities.

We think this collaborative approach with Montana communities has been a major contributor to the many successful action-oriented assessments of fitness and recreation venue accessibility we have completed. Validated instruments such as the AIMFREE were useful and well-accepted by the Accessibility Ambassadors and through this project, a total of 96 assessments were performed using various versions of the AIMFREE (professional and consumer).

The use and adoption of AIMFREE as our instrument of choice when recommending systemic changes to local health/fitness providers or when conducting audits of health/fitness facilities has helped to improve their accessibility for people with disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meg Ann Traci".

Meg Ann Traci, Ph.D.
Director
Montana Disability and Health Program

*The Montana Disability and Health Program
A Partnership of the Montana DPHHS and UM Rural Institute on Disabilities*