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FLOOR DEBATE

March 19, 2002 LB 479, 543, 692

of LB 692 funds, which hopefully will have the effect of mitigating this in this interim between now and when in the future we can do something, if you should see fit not to do anything at this moment. But let me point out that \$1.5 million from LB 692 is going directly to pay for "postcommitment" days around the whole state; that hospitals in counties can file claims through their regionals, regional organizations, to HHS to pay for days, for example, at the Crisis Center in Lancaster County. So HHS tells me that they are putting into effect a \$1.5 million program to try to pay directly, albeit through the regionals, for these "postcommitment" days. Secondly, no LB 692 money is going to the regional centers, but there are provisions for community-based services. Six point five million dollars is being apportioned for community-based services and these community-based services should, in turn, free up the regional centers, which should, in turn, help to alleviate the problem. And, finally, LB 543, which we've passed, had \$3 million for community mental health and substance abuse programs, which DHH has indicated they will try to channel in such a way as to provide further relief for this "postcommitment" problem that the counties have. Three measures, somewhat indirect, but I think there is an intention there to try to help with this problem, try to eliminate the problem as a matter of fact. There's enough money there to eliminate it if it were applied in a focused sort of way. So all I'm saying is that I think there is some hope there that even if you do not pass this bill today that the problem will be seriously mitigated in the next couple of years, hopefully eliminated or mitigated, but any event...in any event I think mitigated so that we can at least endure the problem until revenues return to us as a state and we can address then, directly, Senator Hudkins' bill. I have a feeling she will not forget this problem. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, the Education Committee will meet immediately in Room 2022; Education, Exec Session, Room 2022 now.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Hudkins.