

certainly not going to reduce the amount of money the counties are now paying. I realize that in the past not all counties participated. When this mental health program was started, a lot of federal grant money was available and counties received the service, whether they paid anything in or not. This was mandatory under the federal program. In other words if the county didn't see fit to contribute, they didn't have to. As the service progressed, more and more counties participated, especially as the governing boards were made up of county officials. In Area 3, our area, all counties participated. I would now like to call your attention to the testimony of Dr. Ralph Michener, Director of the Department of Institutions, and I believe each of you have one of these reports on your desk that was just handed out, and I will only read the third paragraph. "The regions and the amount of state funds that they did not match are shown in the Table which follows: The outlying map which is attached to my written testimony shows the makeup of each region. The nonmatching regions are Region II, the West Central Nebraska centering around North Platte; Region III, Mid-Nebraska centering around Kearney and Grand Island; and there is a mistake here, Region V, which is the Southeast, and I believe it says VI on Senator Michener's report, is in Southeast Nebraska centering around Lincoln." If it is not supported, the total load will be back on the regional centers. Now if we do not keep our health centers going in outstate Nebraska and all around, the load will be back on the regional centers at a much greater cost and we will be right back where we were perhaps about twenty years ago and we will have a vast decrease in services to those who need it, and if we wait too long to face the problem and the program is put out of existence from lack of funding, we will wake up to find our professional people gone, our centers closed, and what a shame that would be. So please help me bring out 635 to the floor of the Legislature. Even if you have doubts in your mind at this time, vote to bring it out before us and have a good look at the problem. Remember, this bill does not call for more funding from the state. I think in view of the federal programs more state money will eventually be needed but this bill does not in any way address this. And in closing I would like to read to you a letter I received from a constituent. "I recently discovered that I have a disability which won't enable me to continue in the career which I have chosen. The mental stress of all the pain and confusion is almost more than I can handle. To make a long story short, I finally set up some appointments for therapy at South Central Community Mental Health Center in Holdrege, Nebraska and in just a few sessions I feel more optimistic about my future. If I could not have gone to this center, I would probably have