

March 22, 1982

LB 942

SENATOR CLARK: We are taking your amendment. Senator Cullan's amendment was out of order.

SENATOR CHRONISTER: It was? Okay, Mr. President and members, my amendment is very simple. It requires a change of only one word for another word. But as simple as this exercise is, it can have far reaching effects. Because, if we do not make this change that I am suggesting, we are deleting the services of optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, speech therapists, and physical therapists. Now these are practices and services that have been accepted since 1965. If we do not make this change, it means that in one fell swoop that we are deleting these services that will work a hardship not only on the people that are receiving these services, but also on the vendors that are supplying them. For that reason I urge your support in adopting my amendment in which we delete the word "physicians" and insert "practitioners". Thank you.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Warner.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I again rise to oppose Senator Chronister's amendment on the same basis. What we are attempting to do is only have the mandated services that are required by state law and leave some flexibility for this current year with the Department to try to manage the increase in cost in this whole area. Now the effect of Senator Chronister's amendment I believe would probably mandate something in the vicinity of a million-one or a million-two of expenditures which are not necessarily prohibited now, but then it would mandate that additional cost. It seems to me that the only logical thing we can do is adopt the kind of amendment that the committee has proposed which leaves all services optional other than those that are mandated the level of funding will cover most all of that, will not cover it all, but if we start inserting them back one at a time we will have them all in before we get done and then we are up, somewhere upwards two million dollars short in the budget. Now I'm not all comfortable about doing this either, but I hope that all of you realize the kind of economic bind the state is in. Unless we are willing to give some flexibility to some of these departments to manage as best they can, we are merely compounding the problems which are already serious. There is funding for most of the things and they will probably have to prorate more than they perhaps we would like. But, I would hope that you would not start putting things