

March 31, 1982

LB 942

a terribly good situation but it is far better, frankly, than permitting the Director of the Department to opt out of the optional services. And when you are caught in a tough time and you really do have to scale back some of the offerings, it is far better...it is far better to effect a reduction across the board, at least in this area, than it is to give an administrator the authority to pick and choose which poor people with which kind of ailments will have to bear all the medical costs of that ailment. So I think that in terms of our situation the Cullan amendment is by far the better amendment than the suggestion by the Appropriations Committee that the Director of the Public Welfare be permitted to opt out of any of the optional coverages.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Higgins for the second time.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Yes, this is the second time I have been up on this.

SENATOR CLARK: Fine.

SENATOR HIGGINS: This is a rewrite of LB 932 is what it is, where it says the same thing, medical assistance or behalf of recipients shall be paid directly to vendors and they took out, on behalf of recipients over 65 years of age medical assistance shall include care in institutions, etcetera, etcetera. You are saying we have got an option only with Medicare or Medicaid. No other department, the Department of Roads we don't take an option there when the money runs out. We don't take the Department of Public Institutions and say, let's make an option of what we will pay for and what we won't pay for. I still come back to the same thing, we are hitting those that need the help the most and this is just a little chip starting to take a little bit away at a time till eventually they are not going to get anything. And I am just wondering again, hospitals, they aren't included in this, doctors aren't being told, hey, we are going to put a limit on what we can pay you. Last week it was, don't let them raise the rates over 3.75. That was dropped. I just have to stand here and defend those poor people that need this medical assistance and as far as a choice between the Appropriations Committee amendment and the Cullan amendments, I don't go for either one of them. I don't go for taxing medical assistance away those that have no where else to go. Take away their crutches and tell them you can crawl. I don't think I am making the point with anybody here. I think the votes have already been in and counted. Thank you, Senators.