

March 31, 1982

LB 942

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Cullan, do you wish to close?

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, Senator Higgins, when you indicated that doctors and hospitals do not have a cap, if you read a couple sections down further in the current version of LB 942 you will see that in fact the Appropriations Committee has placed a cap on their increase of fees, a cap of 3.75 percent. I think we are going to be closer....I think we are going to be a lot farther...I think our cash flow problems and the amount of money we are going to be spending on Medicaid in the shortfall is going to be greater than any of us realize today, and so I don't think that any of those people are going to be worried about getting more money this year than they got last year. I think all of those health care providers are going to settle for less. My point is that the alternative to this solution is as Senator Warner said, giving the discretion to the Department of Welfare and then, Senator Higgins, they would have the authority to completely eliminate some of the services which you think are important rather than being forced upon them at 90 percent. I think that the people who provide hearing aids and the people who provide dental care and the people who provide these services as well as the recipients would rather have 90 percent of what we are funding than have the Department of Welfare eliminate those services entirely. So I think this is the logical choice that we have today, this version or the Appropriations Committee version. Now I think we are going to have to come in and do some other things. I think there should be copay required on glasses, on drugs and a lot of other areas, and the Department of Welfare already has statutory authority to require copay in a lot of areas and I think it is unfortunate that they haven't moved in that direction already. So there are a lot of other things that need to be done. Admittedly, this is not a long term solution to the Medicaid problem but it is a first step and I think that next year we are really going to have to come back and take a long hard look at nursing home reimbursement and at many, many other things. But at this stage I think this prorata reduction is the logical choice. I would urge the Legislature to adopt the amendment.

SENATOR CLARK: The question before the House is the adoption of the Cullan amendment. All those in favor vote aye, opposed vote nay. Record the vote.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 9 nays on adoption of Senator Cullan's amendment.

SENATOR CLARK: The amendment is adopted. The next amendment.

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