

particularly to the elderly, the elderly women and so on. I know when my podiatrist received permission and on the medical staff at our hospital how much it saved, and he could also perform surgery along and use the same facilities and again save a considerable amount of money to the people needing those services. And in the hospitals that were requesting...responding to medical staff bylaws, which had to pertain to the podiatrists, 71 percent of them responded that they did have, and about 47 percent of the responding hospitals reported that they granted medical staff membership or privileges to doctors of podiatrists (sic). And I think that all of you know that it is a valuable service, they are very well trained. Maybe as we think back years ago maybe and maybe no. But I can only speak the highest in our area, and I know that it is a saving to the patient and to Medicare and Medicaid. I just would hope for the support of the amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Smith, followed by Senator Hefner.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to make a brief statement of support. I'm also a person who signed on the bill. I think that we need to just keep in mind that this is not...this is really nonthreatening legislation to other organizations, that it's not forcing the hospitals to do anything. What it is doing is just asking them, though, to put in place the rules and regulations that would allow the podiatrists to apply for status as hospital staff along with the same sort of requirement that they have for physicians. And I just would point out that as Senator Nelson mentioned, more than one hospital already does this in the state. I know that in Hastings our two podiatrists there already do have active staff status. So many hospitals are already allowing this, as do 38 other states allow this. So this would just be making legislation active statewide then. I ask for your support for this piece of legislation. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Hefner, followed by Senator Schellpeper.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President, members of the body, I have a question for Senator Nelson, if she'll yield.

SENATOR NELSON: Sure.