

people, not only consumers, but we ourselves as legislators can better understand what is happening out there. What are the expensive hospitals? What are the good quality hospitals? Which are the ones that are high cost? Which are the ones that have a problem with the quality of their care? These are the sort of questions we can answer through the amendments that I am offering through the next three amendments. It provides information to this Legislature and to the people of this state so that we begin to better address the health care cost problem and we need to start to address that problem. There is simply too much to be done and too little tools to do it right now because of the circumstance that we're in. We don't have the ability to act. Certificate of need is not the total solution or even a substantial part of the solution. Much, much more needs to be done and I feel very strongly that we need to move in this direction and we need to take that initiative. As we have, as I said earlier about the piece of legislation before us, we have requests for increased funding, increased expenditure for health care, but we have nothing laid on the table to help us contain those costs, no attempts by the supporters of the bill to come back with an idea of how we can address this all important issue. And right now I think some of the ideas I'm laying out in these next amendments will help begin that process, but in addition, I'm forming a task force that is going to be working in the private sector to take a look at this issue for further action over the course of the next few months and come back next session and begin to address this issue. But, clearly, when you have a 60 percent increase in the CHIP premiums, when you have for private employers 38 percent increases and actually the State of Nebraska as well, 35 to 40 percent annual increases in premiums, you have a situation out of control. This Legislature is going to have to grapple with it. We're going to have to come to grips with it. If we had in any other sector 30 some percent increases in cost I think we'd be obviously concerned and doing something about it. If property taxes went up that amount, if income taxes went up that amount, if sales taxes went up that amount, we'd be screaming and yelling and trying to do something about it, but that is what health care costs are doing and health care costs are out of sight right now for the typical family. You're finding frequently, you know, family coverages in the 250, \$300 a month range which is unheard of compared to where we were just a few short years ago. That is a lot of money to spend. And for some people that can't even get the health insurance and for many people that can't afford the health insurance and go