

looking for it is Bergan Mercy. Bergan has gone through the CON process and has been denied. The reason for that is there is simply, in Omaha, there is simply not a need for further open heart surgery services. The current Omaha metropolitan area capacity for open heart surgeries is 2,250 surgeries per year. In 1988 there were only 1,174 open heart surgeries performed in the Omaha area, and that is a figure that is down from the previous year. A review of I think some of these fact sheets that have been passed out by, I believe, Senator Wesely will show that a review of comparable metropolitan service areas would show that Omaha has the highest number of open heart surgery units per 100,000 population. Omaha is extremely high in the number of hospitals that offer the service. The CON process has judged that there is not an unmet need for more open heart surgeries, or the capacity for more open heart surgery. The Department of Health, the Certificate of Need Review Board, the appeal board of the CON, all have agreed that it's just not necessary. It's also been shown, and I think something that is important and I think that we have to consider when we're looking at this procedure is one of the fact sheets that may have gotten by you in the flood of paper that we received, and that is the fact sheet that shows a graph, that shows that as the number of open heart surgeries performed by an institution decreases the mortality increases. In a nutshell, what we're talking about is the more open heart surgeries a single institution performs, obviously within reasonable limits, the safer it is for the patient, the better off the patient is. And I think that's why we're here. We're not here for anything other than the people and the people who are receiving the care. Cost containment is important. That is...may or may not be an effect of CON. But one of the effects that is coming out of this is the question of...that we would be adding an additional hospital doing open heart surgery. And I believe the process has already started. I believe construction or whatever the capital infusion necessary to begin the heart surgery program there has already started. I think what is important is that...an additional thing that is important is that Bergan Mercy, if it is allowed to go into the open heart surgery field, the ability for St. Joe's to continue to operate as a teaching hospital is severely impaired. Bergan Mercy, in its CON appeal, or its CON process, stated that they would take, they estimated that they would take approximately 142 cases from St. Joe's per year. That, obviously, is going to result in a reduction in the...obviously in income to St. Joe's, but more importantly it's going to result in a reduction in the exposure of students