

granting of that operation at Bergan. There were quotes by Senator Labedz about the issue. I quote Kim Murphy, whose on the panel, and she says, "Frankly, it appeared more that this was a desire to offer a service than to fill an unmet need." That is really a key question here, are we trying to meet the need, or are we just trying to fill up services so that hospitals are able to provide whatever they wish to provide. In addition, I've passed out, on a yellow sheet, the history of the Bergan Mercy issue. If you take a look at that you'll see how time after time Bergan has tried to move forward on this without perhaps working through the channels as they should, trying to get this done without getting the proper authorization. Now they are working through that system as they should and I guess they had good reason to try and circumvent it because they had been turned down twice now in that process. I'm sure they'll...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...appeal that, but nevertheless it appears to me that the people that should know and the experts over in the department have reviewed this and found that Bergan ought not have that right. So open heart surgery is important. It should be reviewed. And I commend Senator Lindsay for offering this amendment. It really comes down to the problem in Omaha, where you have the hospitals in such competition that they forgot how to work together. In Lincoln we've not got that problem. We have one open heart surgery operation in place, and that's Bryan Hospital. We've divided between the hospitals key high cost, high quality areas so that each hospital has a different function to play. In Omaha they could do something similar. But because of their intense competition they're unable to do that. So, instead of sharing and cooperating they compete and they try to cover every service possible, have every piece of equipment they'd like. And that ups the cost and I think lowers the quality and it really is a problem, particularly acute in Omaha. But nevertheless that's where the fight is, and that's where the issue is, and I would recommend supporting Senator Lindsay's amendment.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Schellpeper, please, followed by Senator Pirsch.

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I would like to ask Senator Lindsay a question, please.