

now it's reached the point where we have, as you will...you're having a map handed out to you which will show you the counties in the state in the eight area agencies on aging areas that have no services. There is no way they have money now to extend the services to these counties where nothing is in place without additional funding from the state level. And I would like to just give you a few examples of the kinds of services that I'm talking about. You realize, of course, that Nebraska is very high in the number of elderly population. We rank eighth in the nation in numbers of elderly persons in proportion to our total population, about 61,000 older Nebraskans, age 65 years of age and older and of these about half are 75 years of age and older. Our people are living longer, becoming more frail, more at risk and much more in need of in-home kinds of services and that is exactly the intent of this amendment. It would be to appropriate funding for those kinds of services which would help maintain folks in their home rather than having to resort to institutionalized care which is at a much higher level of cost, at a time when Medicaid dollars are increasing considerably from, I believe, about \$13 million to \$30 million in the past few years. That's the increases alone. This money would be well spent if we could put this amount of money, \$400,000 as a start, at least, to building those services that would provide in-home kinds of things, helping to maintain people and make them remain a viable part of their community. No additional administration dollars will be needed because it's already all in place. The area agencies are already there. The total money that we put into this program will go to direct services, to those who most need it, the frail elderly folks of Nebraska. I ask your support for the amendment and I would answer any questions that you might have.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. For discussion purposes, Senator Scofield, followed by Senators Warner, Hannibal, and Crosby. Senator Scofield.

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Mr. President and members, Senator Smith has long been an advocate of this program and I guess in terms of what she is saying philosophically is at least consistent I think generally with what we have said, and that is when you can, keep people in the homes. I would point out again that the committee did, through LB 743, recommend a 10 percent increase each year in this program which is consistent with the agency request. Senator Smith is obviously pushing this up to what I think the intent was with the original 1982 legislation, that is