

federal mandates but they've got a little hook on it, they say, if you don't, you jeopardize your federal funds and in Medicaid it's \$190 million this year.

SENATOR PETERSON: Thank you. That's all for now. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Wesely, Senator Hannibal on deck.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members, I think this has been a good discussion to initiate again a review of the situation with services for our mentally ill and I have been involved in this now for a long time. When I was first elected in 1979 I was on the Health Committee and that was followed, a couple years later, with an effort to close down the Norfolk Regional Center and I worked with then Senator Tom Kennedy and he was followed by Senator Dick Peterson to keep that regional center open. I think that's been talked about before and it certainly has been proved to be a necessity and a mistake would have been made if we had closed down that facility. So I'm supportive of the Norfolk Regional Center for mental health services. I have been that way all the 11 years I've been in the Legislature. My concern with this amendment right now is perhaps we're not real sure of where we're going. And so my advice, Senator Peterson, would be not to proceed with the amendment to perhaps carry on some discussions with the Department of Public Institutions, with Appropriations Committee and with the Health and Human Services Committee to determine exactly where we are. Let me give you a quick synopsis of where I think we are. I think Senator Hannibal has gone through the OBRA provisions and, clearly, we have a mandate that we cannot get out of, that we must have not only screening but we must have in place services. Now this new facility may meet some of those service requirements but the concept of OBRA is to take individuals out of a nursing home setting and move them, I think, primarily in a community placement setting that would help these individuals and be a lower cost and be more appropriate services for them. To take these individuals out of a nursing home and turn around and put them in a regional center really doesn't accomplish the goal. So, by doing what you're doing, you're not going to meet the mandate of OBRA and you're not really saving money in turning it around and putting it in a different place. You're actually adding onto the cost. All you're doing is putting off the cost addition until a later point. So I think, as far as OBRA goes, the depart...we're a bit confused about what is happening there but I think the