

Medicaid, I have a motion up to strike a provision that relates to state aid to cities. In attempt to telescope down our discussions I'm going to withdraw that motion, I'll offer it on Select File at another day. I'm prepared to vote for all portions of this bill, at this moment, with the exception of the \$50 million cash fund. And, with that, I will ask the Clerk to withdraw my motion that I have on the desk on a later issue that we'll be discussing. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you, it is withdrawn. Senator Byars.

SENATOR BYARS: Yes, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. I rise in support of Section 1 which will increase Medicaid rates for noninstitutional medical providers. Those of us who are in communities that serve as a hub for a given geographical area in providing medical services, indeed, understand that there is a very serious problem in providing these services. In my...one of the towns in my district, of Beatrice, for an example, we have one small group of doctors left in our community that are providing service, Medicaid services, and the reason is very, very simple why the other doctors are not providing these services, they cannot come even close to breaking even with their actual costs. In studies that have been done within the State of Nebraska we find that the average overhead costs for an office within the State of Nebraska shows a cost for each Medicaid patient of \$22.57. The average reimbursement rate for the same procedure is \$15.10. Now, I think all doctors feel an obligation to serve the public wherever possible, but when it starts to get to the place where they cannot possibly share these costs with other patients in a fair manner, they have to have some additional reimbursements. We're seeing, in our communities in my district, a patient overload in the offices that are still seeing Medicaid patients. And, because of this, their booked solid, and many times the Medicaid patient is not receiving any services at all, they're falling through the cracks just like the medically indigent that Senator Lynch has just spoken about. And I think it's imperative that...I don't think the doctors are asking for unrealistic dollar amounts, I think they're saying, hey, please help me break even so that I can provide these services. And I would strongly urge that we give positive consideration to Section 1 of LB 525. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Any other discussion on Section 1 of the committee amendments? Senator Lynch, please.