

wasteful not to reopen this vacant ward when the need is so great. It would take Norfolk Regional Center not over three months to be ready because it already has the license. Anyone other than Norfolk Regional Center would have to take the time for a certificate of need and hire the same nursing staff plus hire at least two psychiatrists at about 100,000 to 180...around 100,000 each. The average operating cost of Regional Centers is \$152 per day, and the other psychiatry hospitals is well over 400 per day, depending where they are. The Regional Centers would not be limited to patients from just one region so all Nebraskans could benefit. Even if a private hospital could get some funds from the federal government to operate this ward, it still wouldn't justify using taxpayers dollars, whether federal or state, when operating cost is almost four times higher to do so. When you have got a Cadillac, why pay more for a Chevy? Dr. John Baldwin, a noted Lincoln psychiatrist, a private psychiatrist, estimates the need for in-patient beds to be 100, adult, and 40 for children. Even if you cut that in half, that is still way too...we are still short. Then add to this the fact that we have a potentially greater demand for in-patient beds with the implementation of the Federal Nursing Home Reform Act in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987, called OBRA. This would force mentally ill retarded persons from Medicaid certified nursing homes. Some of these people need structured care and cannot function appropriately in the community-based program. They need acute or long-term care that the Regional Centers can provide so well. Do we want to save lives? We have a choice here today. I hope your compassion is there to help a number of people. In regards to a problem we have at Hastings. I think there is a few beds out there and it is my hope that I will work very diligently, what all I can, to help Senator Jacky Smith. I think the problem we have at Hastings, also, we need more detox and, Senator Smith, I will help you in any way I can to accomplish that, in that endeavor. How much time do I have, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Two and a half minutes, sir.

SENATOR PETERSON: If all of you received a copy from the City of Norfolk, on the Public Safety, Police Division, I wish you all would take a look at this. Look at the Town of Norfolk alone, what the problem is, and compound it with all the other towns, whether they be big or small. It says "Per your request, I have examined the Police Division's records regarding emergency protective custody committals performed by the Norfolk