

for passing this out, Senator Wesely passed out a little chart showing you where our needs may be most acute, and if you look at the chart, you will notice that the needs are not the most acute in the Regional Center capacity area. The needs are more acute in the emergency placement area and the needs are more acute in the residential alternative areas, and those are the areas we ought to try to address. Now we have tried to do that with the additional \$300,000 this year and an additional \$600,000 next year, or the first year...second year of the biennium for emergency psychiatric services. We have also placed a \$1,300,000 within the department to give them the ability and flexibility to create and work with the regions to create alternative placements in accordance with the Nursing Home Reform Act provisions coming down from the federal government. To say yes to opening this ward is to say we need more capacity. I am under the understanding from the director and from the department, and I realize there is differences of opinion here, but our overall capacity in Regional Centers is not the major problem that we have. We have capacity at Hastings. The director of the department has instituted a new policy, relatively new policy that says if there is an overcapacity situation at Norfolk, acting as a catchment center from Douglas County, then the catchment center should shift to Hastings, and the policy is there that Hastings shall take overcapacity requests. It is also as to the policy that if you have an emergency situation you don't refuse emergency placement even at Norfolk right now. If you are convinced that we have a total capacity problem in the Regional Centers, then you vote yes for this amendment. If you are not convinced of that but rather are interested in trying to spend the money that we have for these patients and these clients in the most efficient and least restrictive way possible, which I think is still a good goal, then I don't think we need to implement this amendment. The Health and Human Services Committee is going to do an interim study this summer and look at all areas of mental health. We have addressed to the best of our ability right now the Emergency Protective Services, the Emergency Psychological Services, excuse me, Psychiatric Services, and we do have overall capacity at the Regional Centers. For us to embark upon a program of just...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: ...opens a new ward without having the benefit of this study, especially in the fact that...in view of