

significant problem for us down the line in trying to solve this problem without taxing providers. And I guess my view on that, after looking at the evidence this summer, is that generally if we tax providers, no matter how we do it, whether it's across the board, gross revenue tax, or increase in license fee, or whatever it might be, those costs are going to be carried forward to the health care system, generally, and it's going to increase costs rather and control costs. A provider tax, in my mind, is a solution of last resort. And if, hopefully, again this settlement will not push us into that problem. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Ashford. Senator Lynch.

SENATOR LYNCH: Question.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Lynch. There is no one else wishing to speak, so I will recognize Senator Wesely for closing. Is Senator Wesely here? Okay. I assume closing is waived, so we'll proceed...Senator Wesely, do you wish to close?

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President. I've been trying to talk to the administration about the situation on the settlement. What they're telling me is that they feel it would take 18 months to get a managed care plan put into place, and that the other elements that we thought may be involved in this settlement may not be as harsh as I thought. We haven't gotten the language. I'm just expressing what I was told from the initial information. And, obviously, the Legislature wasn't very fully informed about all of the elements of this proposal. But again I emphasize the talk has all been in this direction. And what they're saying is it takes that long, I don't know why it would take 18 months, but evidently that's what they think it will take, and if that's the only reasonable thing we can do, I can understand that. But I'm cautioning that we clearly have to move on this. And 18 months, in my view, is too slow a period of time. We should be talking about moving much more quickly than this. And we're talking here about having a plan by January 1, and I still think that plan can be brought to us. And I think we ought to stick by our guns and suggest that a faster time frame be developed, because another year and a half is another unbelievable amount of money lost into the system. And so we'll try and work with the administration. I think they're still committed to a managed care plan they're telling me. So that's good news. It's just a matter of timing. And I