

people have said to me with trying to determine a year ahead of time if someone is going to be Medicaid eligible. And so what the amendment does is to strike the word Medicaid eligible and, therefore, that you would go back to the way the bill at one time originally was where you would only be screening those people that you know are Medicaid when they come in to the hospital setting. Senator Wesely and I have had a discussion as if we could try to do it both ways, one year for what would be Medicaid eligible, one year for all of those patients admitted or ready for dismissal and we can have that discussion or debate, but I...this got my attention. It had something that I thought needed to be brought to the body and understand what we're saying and that certainly there are people who feel that it's a real intrusion into the privacy that we go in a year ahead of time as people are getting ready to be dismissed and say we need to determine if in a year you will be Medicaid eligible. That has raised my concern and that's why I bring this amendment, removing that wording, to the floor.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Bohlke. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President, members, I rise in opposition to this amendment. Let me tell you, we spent a lot of time working on the Medicaid issue a couple of years ago. Senator Hall, Senator Moore, Senator Warner and many of you, Senator Wehrbein, many of us were on the task force that studied this. We came up with a package of bills. We had 24 bills. We passed about ten of them or something like that. The one and only thing we had in there that dealt with the biggest part in the Medicaid budget was this effort to do prescreening before people went into nursing homes. We spent a lot of time trying to talk about managed care and other efforts to cut the cost of Medicaid, but the only thing we could come up with in terms of nursing homes is to try and keep people from coming into a nursing home if they didn't need to be there, because ultimately the vast majority of individuals end up going on to the Medicaid program and costing the State of Nebraska and the taxpayers a significant amount of money. And if they don't need to be there, if there is a way to provide for their needs short of a nursing home, it will save money and they will prefer it because most everybody I know doesn't want to, they don't want to go into a nursing home to begin with. They would rather stay at home, but in some cases they end up without having the supports they need and they are forced into a nursing home and then we're forced to pay \$25,000 a year to cover the cost of that nursing