

forth. But there is no place where any savings can be shown, no place. And the questions that are asked, the few that I've asked already have no answers. Senator Wesely, if these questions are not answered in December, in fact if no questions are answered, the so called merger will proceed anyway on the first of January, or whatever that date is. Isn't that correct?

SENATOR WESELY: Right, under the current draft of the bill, January 1 will be the date that those old agencies go away and the new one...new three come into existence.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Senator Wesely, can...after we're out of session can some savings, I put the word "savings" in quotes, can some purported savings be announced, based on a reduction in Medicaid payments rather than actual savings resulting from this supposed merger activity?

SENATOR WESELY: Well, that's actually a good point to make. And if I could take a second. What...there is a broad grant of authority to the agency to administer different programs. The statutes are there with some specifics, but Medicaid, for instance, currently there is quite a bit of authority and latitude to the department. So they can take some action dealing with reimbursement rates and what have you, that's a grant of authority they now have. We don't change that. Whatever authorities they have, that continues under the bill. We don't grant them new authorities, we don't take away authorities. So, in fact, some of the things you talked about, I mean they can now restructure and bring people together within the agency, and personnel might be brought together in a different way. So some of those things could still exist, but that could exist now. So that's why there's an uncertainty about how far it will go, but certainly no further than it can go now is what I'm trying to make very clear.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Senator Wesely gave one of the arguments why I keep saying this bill is not necessary, because what is being discussed in the bill can be done right now, to a great extent. But the question I'm asking with reference to the Medicaid question, isn't it possible for them to announce reductions in Medicaid payouts and credit that, or attribute that to savings, based on this merger activity, if a choice is made to characterize it in such a manner?