

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

January 27, 1999

commitment to welfare reform. As a result, my budget is reduced \$1.7 million in this area over two years. But funding is included to cover the costs of increased utilization of child care services for low-income working families to remove a major barrier to their ability to be self-sufficient. My budget recognizes the needs for adequate healthcare for Nebraskans with particular needs. In recognition of Nebraska's positive economic status, the federal match for Medicaid was reduced for the coming year. General Funds of \$9.4 million are included in the budget to offset this federal reduction. In addition, funding for two very important programs, Medicaid and long-term care, has been increased \$35.3 million to cover added utilization and medical inflation. I've added funding for community-based services for juveniles. This will provide attention closer to home so that families and communities can be actively involved in the rehabilitation of youthful offenders. The additional services will give further assurance of public safety and will help alleviate pressure at the youth centers at Kearney and Geneva, allowing long-term treatment for serious offenders. This budget also adds \$7.2 million in General Funds to continue necessary mental health services at regional centers, and commits an additional \$2.4 million to further develop community-based services for the mentally ill. Regional center care will be provided for those who require such care, but, increasingly, outpatient care should be available to promote a more independent lifestyle for persons with mental illness. In addition, \$5.2 million in General Funds and \$6 million in federal funds are included over the biennium to increase rates for private providers of services for the developmentally disabled. The adjusted rates will allow service providers to raise salaries for their employees, and will increase rates to 92.5 percent and 95 percent of the established reimbursement methodology over the biennium. I continue our commitment to our senior citizens. General Funds are added to provide additional service coordination for elderly persons facing long-term care decisions. Information and assessment will be provided to enable the elderly to find care services that will preserve their independence as long as possible. And funds have been added to provide additional in-home and community-based services for the elderly. My budget recommendations also include reaffirmations of capital construction projects currently underway, totaling almost