

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

April 7, 1999

LB 559

step in towards access to people all over the state. You know that Nebraska pioneered telemedicine in 1959. They actually did it in Omaha between the Nebraska Psychiatric Institute and the state mental hospital some 112 miles away. In 1959, they had two television sets with two different cameras going back and forth. Omaha pioneered telemedicine in this country, and they really don't get a lot of credit for that. The committee amendment, now the amendment to that that does become the bill I support for a variety of reasons, but I think the major one is this delaying of the date is important to put the policy in place now. But I want to make sure that the rules and regulations, which there are many, are done correctly. There's going to be some bumps in the road here. The other important thing is that with this amendment too there's no A bill here. There's not a...there's not a cost. What we're doing is the same thing that you can do in person can be done through telehealth with Medicaid, and I really think that's an important concept. I would urge the adoption of this amendment to the committee amendments.

SENATOR BOHLKE: Thank you, Senator Kristensen. Before we move to the first speaker, Senator Smith would like to announce that he has two guests: Nancy Sakurada from Morrill, and Jamie Schaupp. Would you please stand, and they're under the south balcony, and be welcomed by the Legislature. Senator Byars, on the amendment to the amendment.

SENATOR BYARS: Thanks, Senator Bohlke and colleagues. I want to speak to the amendment and basically to the bill. I stand in strong, strong support of this piece of legislation and I'm sure all of you realize, in listening to the opening and to the...to the presentations by both Senator Kristensen and Senator Jensen, whom I applaud for bringing this piece of legislation, and this is cutting edge, folks. This is something that we've been fiddling with for probably 30-40 years, but this is cutting edge. And you talk about the opportunities for the rural and the urban areas of this state to work together in providing care to the citizens of this state, this is an unbelievable opportunity. As we have listened to the presentation in the Health Committee, as we talked privately with the doctors and the medical staff from Kearney who have already experimented with telehealth, it's unbelievable the amount of dollars that