

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

March 21, 2000 LB 1217

needed and deserved financial compensation that we outlined in the letter of February 28th. That was another letter. The closure of the Paxton would represent a social tragedy in this state. She goes on to say that recently the U.S. Supreme Court mandated that states have community-based programs to provide for a reasonable accommodation to mentally ill individuals if placement outside of a long-term care institution was appropriate. This case is known as Olmstead v. L.C. by Zimring. The decision was based under the public services portion of the Americans With Disabilities Act. Nebraska has quietly developed community-based living environments for the MI population through providers like O.U.R. Homes and the Paxton, among others. Nebraska takes a giant step backwards in the face of this court decision with the possible closing of the Paxton. She goes on to suggest that the rate increase of...that the rate would be increased from \$722 to \$1,022 a day...or a month, and what this amendment does it is goes a little bit lower than that. It increases it to \$900 a month because we're talking a fairly good amount of money here. One of the things that I passed out to you was provider rates for the states around us, and you'll notice that in Colorado they get \$1,400 per day; South Dakota, there's several different things, but either \$959 per month or \$1,122 per month. Texas, Iowa, et cetera, Kansas, everybody pays more than Nebraska does. Well, like I said, this is a complicated system and this issue has come up kind of at the last minute, at least to my...to my radar screen, and what I wanted to do was to give us a chance to find out exactly what's happening here, because I understand there is an appropriation increase of providers who provide for mentally ill but it doesn't cover this particular segment, and I'm wanting to hear the concerns of others, like Senator Hilgert and so forth, who's, I know, been in some conversations with the Governor about the Paxton Manor closing and I wanted it to bring to your attention and then I want to have the opportunity to go to the Health Department and find out if there's anything that can be done. These people haven't had an increase in a number of years and they are really hurting right now. If we wait till next year it may be awfully late to address their concerns, but I do want that opportunity to do so. Now the Fiscal Office tells me that there are about 1,600 people that are covered by this particular supplement, state supplement. So, with that, Madam President, I would yield the rest of my time and wait to hear