

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

March 10, 2004 LB 1005

I want to very definitely let the body know that I think that this is a great amendment that needs to be done. As we move ahead with our mental health restructuring in this state, one of the needs that is absolutely mandatory is that we set in motion a production line for our mental health workers. This bill covers the entire gamut of these people, and it will make or certainly enhance the possibility of getting all steps of the mental health team out in rural areas. One of the things that I particularly like about this bill is this, as Senator Cunningham said, that it is good for over 80 counties. If I recall correctly, the way you can determine this is, take Lancaster and Douglas County and surround them with the adjoining counties, these are the ones that are not eligible. If you go outside of this area, then all of these people become eligible. One of the problems that we've had in the past is that there...the designation of counties that were available, or areas that were available, and so that a practitioner could, for instance, be in Kearney, Nebraska, but could not be eligible, even though he might take care of patients from Minden, and the law was written so he actually had to live in Minden in order to do it. This is a much better written bill. And I think that it will help with the access of mental health in outstate Nebraska. I return the rest of my time to the Chair.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Johnson. Further discussion on AM2910? Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, I support the amendment. And it's obviously a good thing, just as the creation or categorization of additional hospitals in the rural areas as critical access hospitals is a good thing. But both of these good things three and four years down the line, when you put them together, is going to be more than \$1 million more of federal...of General Fund money out of the state treasury. And that's just fine. But I hope you all, when it comes budget time and you're thinking about everything we're supporting in the budget and you're thinking about the new things we're putting into statute now that are going to cost in the future, even though we don't have any money right now, I hope you're supportive of what's being done to generally maintain the load that government has taken on at the state