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FLOOR DEBATE

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recognized to open on LB 1083.

SENATOR JENSEN:      Thank you, Mr. President.      Members of the Legislature, I certainly don't have to emphasize the issue of behavioral health reform and it's...how extremely emotional and complex it is. I simply want to emphasize three things at the outset of this debate. First of all, how we got here. Earlier this month Nebraska celebrated its birthday. We became a state in 19...or, excuse me, 1867. Matter of fact, the state university was established in 1869, two years later. In 1870, Nebraska's first state hospital for the insane opened here in Lincoln. In 1888, the Norfolk hospital for the insane opened; transferred 97 patients from Lincoln. In 1889, the asylum for incurable insane opened at Ingleside, Nebraska, which is now the Hastings Regional Center, just to give you the dates of how far back we have gone with mental health. I might also mention that that was a time when people who had loved ones with mental health many times put them in institutions far away from their home because there was a stigma in the families of those individuals who suffered from mental health and also for the families who had those individuals. And in 1955, Nebraska inpatient census was at 4,746 patients, about 1,600 at each one of the regional centers. In 1963, President Kennedy signed the Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act; 1963, remember that date. In 1965, President Johnson signed the Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act with amendments of 1965. And then also in 1965 Medicaid/Medicare are enacted, and a little piece was included into that act that said institutions for mental diseases, IMD, exclusion. The policy, that policy, prohibited Medicaid reimbursement for care provided to individuals older than 21 years old, younger than 65, if the care is delivered in a psychiatric institution. That means that no Medicaid funding of individuals reside...of an individual who resides in a psychiatric institution. That's been in effect since 1965. And so here we are in Nebraska. We also had a period in the sixties and seventies where we moved 90 percent of the patients of those three state hospitals out into the community. Why did we do that? First of all, we had the development of psychotropic drugs that we didn't have before, and people found that if they had depression or schizophrenia or bipolar, that there were