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FLOOR DEBATE

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been emphasized by the United States Supreme Court in the Olmstead v. L.C. Very important case. It said that individuals in a...or in an institution, if they want community-based services, they must be given those community-based services, and Georgia found that out, and we are one of a few states that really haven't addressed that situation. And Nebraska hasn't had all that great luck in some of the lawsuits that we've been involved in, and if we don't do something in LB 1083, very soon a lawsuit is also going to be filed in Nebraska for those individuals who want treatment in community-based services. Prior to that, we had the O'Connor v. Donaldson, which says that you cannot deny liberty to someone who has completed treatment. And yet, in our regional centers, we have kept people there because there were not community-based services available to them. But you cannot deny someone's liberty, and we're open again to that. According to recent estimates, Nebraska has 67,000 adults that suffer from mental illness and, as a matter of fact, last year we, through our system, treated about 37,000 adults in our system, around 700 of those in Hastings and Norfolk. And if you would have looked at the November issue of Governing magazine, that we all get, you would have seen where Nebraska spends about 65 percent of its dollars on institutional care and 35 percent of its dollars on community-based services, which is exactly the opposite of Iowa, Kansas, Wisconsin, Minnesota, all of the states around us, as states move towards community-based services. The current behavioral health system has accomplished some good things and those who serve in the system deserve our sincere gratitude. The Legislature, including members of the Health and Human Services Committee, have expressed unanimous support for improving of this system. Several consistent themes have emerged as key focuses in the area of reform. One, state leadership,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR JENSEN: ...the system needs to be strengthened and made more accountable. LB 1083 proposes to establish a division of Behavioral Health Services within the Department of Health and Human Services, and requires appointment of an administrator, a chief clinical officer, a program administrator for consumer affairs, all that within the Health and Human Services System.