

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

March 17, 2004 LB 1083

could be affected by the intentional...or the intended reduction, discontinuation, or closure. All funding related to the provision of any regional center services that are reduced or discontinued under this section shall be reallocated and expended by the division for the purpose related to the statewide development and provision of community-based behavioral health services. The division may establish state-operated community-based behavioral health services to replace regional center services that are reduced or discontinued under this section. The division shall provide regional center employees with appropriate training and support to transition such employees into positions as may be necessary for the provision of such state-operated services. The provisions of this section are self-executing and require no further authorization or other enabling legislation. This is the section that really deals with the state hospitals that we have today. I just want to make a few comments, and that is that currently in Norfolk we have 65 to 70 percent of those patients in Norfolk are from Omaha; 30 percent of the patients in Hastings are from Omaha. If this plan, if there are patients from Norfolk that must travel to Omaha for services, the plan is flawed. Likewise, if we have people from Omaha or North Platte that have to go for services to Norfolk, the plan is flawed. We hopefully have taken care of that within the plan. I also want to mention--if you don't have one, we can get you one--this is the plan that is set up by the...first of all, the regions, the six regions, and then the state Health and Human Services Division. And if you have one of these, take a look at it. Take a look at the number of items and the number of sections that they worked through. I think that they have done a remarkable job. First of all, I commend the regions themselves, the six service regions. I might also mention that of the six service regions, Region I, the Panhandle, they have reduced their admissions to the Hastings Regional Center by over 80 percent. They're approaching, as a matter of fact, 90 percent. Why did they do that? Number one, the pure windshield time; 350 miles away from Hastings. Number two, they wanted services closer to the people. And through Regional West and the hiring of a psychiatrist out there, plus another doctor, they are able to provide those services. They're receiving great outcomes, closer to their home, and along with that, all