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FLOOR DEBATE

April 6, 2004 LB 1083

clarification was requested by Senator Burling and the Hastings Regional Center, which currently has three separate licenses. The date of March 15, 2004, was included at Senator Burling's request to provide certainty about the licensed capacity number at a fixed date in time, prior to the passage of the bill. "Occupancy" in the amendment means occupancy of those licensed psychiatric hospital beds. The amendment retains the name of the Compulsive Gambler Assistance Fund, but still changes all references to problem gambling to reflect more appropriate clinical technology. LB 1083 changed the name of Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund to Problem Gamblers Assistance...Gamblers Assistance Fund. The amendment clarifies that county of residence of a subject of a mental health board petition is responsible for the cost of the mental health proceeding concerning the subject. This issue was raised by Senator Don Pederson on General File. The amendment also adds a severability clause to the bill to clarify that if any section of...or any part of any section of the bill is found to be invalid or unconstitutional, that finding would not affect the validity or constitutionality of other parts of the bill. I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. President, to just quickly comment on two other points about LB 1083, if I may. First, there have been a couple recent newspaper articles discussing primarily...or reform plans submitted by the regions on March 15 and raising questions about the cost of reform. Final plans were submitted by the regions on March 30, which made adjustments to those preliminary figures, and HHS will make other adjustments before they submit their final plan on July 1. I'd just like to say this is somewhat analogous to the appropriation process that we have here in the Legislature, that agencies come forward with their funding requests and then the Appropriations work through a priority system on the final appropriations bill that comes before this. I just want to repeat that the underlying policy of LB 1083 is attainment of needed reforms and servicing as many people as possible within existing General Fund appropriations. The intent is not to impose any new funding obligations on counties. The intent is to access federal Medicaid funding and other private sector funding for the development of community-based services, and to transfer patients and funding from the regional centers to the community. The primary focus is on the current mental health