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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR FLOOD: Well, that being said, Senator Synowiecki, I think it's important to note that before this reform really got going, a lot of times providers in Norfolk would try and find placement specifically in the Omaha area, and for whatever reason, the community-based services didn't exist. And they would say, I'm sorry, we can't take any patients from Norfolk. And Omaha hospitals' emergency rooms would be calling Norfolk, saying, we've got two patients that we need to get up there. So we can look back as long as you want. But as far as the Norfolk Regional Center's track record, those doors are open to whoever is admitted, or committed, I should say, by the mental health board of an appropriate region. So I wouldn't have a problem with that. And I think you'd find that the Norfolk Regional Center, when necessary, would take back anybody as long as they had room.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Again, Senator Flood, I appreciate your approach, and I appreciate your refreshing demeanor and what you bring to the debate relative to mental health reform in our state. Kind of switching gears a little bit, is it your experience, in talking with the folks at the regional center, that a critical link in...that we're missing, in terms of discharge planning for these patients, is the critical need...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: ...for housing? Can you speak to that at any level, Senator, with your relationship with the regional center administration? How critically important is the housing issue relative to discharge planning for the patients at Norfolk?

SENATOR FLOOD: Senator Synowiecki, I appreciate that question, because residential care is absolutely lacking across the state in a community-based setting. We have a provider, a private provider in Norfolk, Liberty Centre Services, that has kind of a clubhouse concept with residential services available, and has been a model nationwide, in fact. And there is a considerable amount of residential behavioral health services that are lacking statewide. And I think they've been frustrated because