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

April 4, 2005 LB 709

SENATOR BYARS: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. I appreciate that very much. Again I ask you, start to think about what Medicaid does in the state, and start thinking about what it is that's necessary if you start looking at reform. Can we reform the structure? You know, and I'm sorry, Senator Jensen, you know, when I hear that 60 person figure to implement Medicare Part D pharmaceutical thing, I think it's baloney. And over the years, as I've watched these figures come out of the fiscal folks over at Health and Human Services, who...most of which are absolutely wonderful, I watched them build a computer system that was supposed to do everything but provide services themselves; it Now we're talking about spending millions of was a flop. dollars to build a new system. Maybe we ought to start talking about the structure that we have of providing services at this I think probably there might be a little bit of frustration on the part of most of the members of this body. Should that be included in this? Are we going to relook at how we're providing services and what the structure is of our department? I don't think any one of you wants to force people to have to go to the emergency room of the hospital because they've got a toothache. That's what happens when you don't have Medicaid providers that are being reimbursed appropriately. I don't think it takes very much to look statistically at how much hospitals are writing off in indigent care right now. Between 40 and 60 percent of the revenue, average, of all the hospitals in the state of Nebraska, are written off because they're providing indigent care. That's to people who can't get That's to people who don't have access to insurance. Medicaid. And I'm scared to death...and maybe it's just my own paranoia, and tell me if I'm wrong, but I'm just scared to death that what we're going to try to come up with out of this plan is not something that truly reforms how we can better provide for the people of the state that have needs, but how we can find ways to provide less to them. I am really frightened that that is what we're going to do. That isn't the answer. That is not in my heart, and I hope it's not in the heart of the majority of the members of this body. Are we spending millions and millions of are we spending them all, every one of them, appropriately? I would guess that we can all say, no. I think we can go down into the trenches and we can find people who are abusing the system. I think you can find it everywhere you