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SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: I appreciate that, Senator Erdman. I have been in contact with Dick Nelson from the Department of Health and Human Services, and they are at this moment studying the question of information-gathering or statistical-gathering as the amendment would assign to that department. Preliminarily, with a little bit of tinkering and with their N-FOCUS program, there is a potential, and Senator Howard will probably have much more to add in terms of the intricacies of the department and their information-gathering. But it appears that this would be of minimal cost. I would also mention, Senator Erdman, that several states have done this, and they have not been met with exceedingly dire costs associated with such an information-gathering program.

SENATOR ERDMAN: Thank you, Senator Synowiecki. And a follow-up question, I guess, would be, have you had discussions then with the actual providers? I recognize that the Medicaid program is administered under the department that Mr. Nelson is a part of, but rather the hospitals or other facilities that may be providing the direct care that would actually be gathering this information?

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: The short answer is no. I believe they're gathering this information now. It would be a situation where they would have to relay this information to the department. They may already be doing this in instances of compensated care such as Medicaid.

SENATOR ERDMAN: Okay. Thank you, Senator Synowiecki. And as far as the information, you are actually correct, as far as what my intent is. The system of Medicaid is bigger than just the direct program we provide. It leads to costs that are associated elsewhere. Whether or not this amendment should be adopted to this bill or not is a question that I continually will have as I read through it. This has been enacted in legislation in other states and I think it's important for us to understand if that information is available and what the procedures would be. Whether they're correctly outlined here or not is obviously not at our discretion because it wasn't a formal process for this bill to be brought before us. But I