

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

May 5, 2005

LB 425

those increases that were used as separate from the pay equity issue, that is, looking at providers of services and looking at their entire operational costs and what it is to bring them up to what would be considered by the Appropriations Committee and the executive branch as parity. What we saw years ago is that there is a significant difference between developmental disability services providers and other types of providers that are funded by Health and Human Services; and that if you look across the broad array of those service providers from behavioral health specialists to psychologists, psychiatrists to dentists to doctors to anybody, to hospitals to anybody in that array of services, most of those individuals that are funded by Health and Human Services don't have their entire client base made up in the same way that the client base is made up by developmental disabilities service providers. And I think it's important that you keep that in mind. And this why, significantly over a period of the last 10 to 15 years, we have looked at this group of people in a different light, a different way, than we have other areas of funding. So keep in mind we're talking two separate...we're talking one big general pot of General Fund dollars, but we're talking about different providers and a different client base that we're talking about for persons with developmental disabilities than we are in other areas. And we have to keep that definitely in mind. And when we look at that issue, I think it reminds us of the whole quality issue that we're faced with, the whole turnover, the retention issue that we have with direct care service providers. And I think, as we've looked over the years, and I can't remember the exact numbers, but I think somewhere upwards of 60 percent of those direct care staff turn over in any given year. So I think it's important that we're mindful of that. I do understand, and I...Senator Pederson will talk about this some more, that there was some carryover in the developmental disabilities fund from last year. I look at that, and I think he'll probably agree, that those were carried over because of a lack of management of funds. It wasn't because of an extra amount of dollars. Now could some of those possibly be used in some rate equity? Yes, there's a possibility of that happening. There's no reason that, therefore, that we can't look at these increases in the General Fund. And if those dollars can be utilized within the existing budget and we see that between now