

today is the rising cost of health care and the rapidly escalating cost of all related forms of health care, that there has to be some method of addressing these continuing increases in cost if the public is to be protected from what we hesitantly call perhaps exploitation. I know that there are many legitimate concerns that there would be over-regulation by the adoption of the amendments which we have proposed to you here today but I would suggest that these amendments are the only answer that we can provide at this time to try to give some sense of direction to health care providers as to the legislative intent and the wishes of the public in this regard. I know that many of us have been concerned because certain areas of the state have been consistently faced with the problem of overconstruction of certain type of health care facilities. There are those individuals who have told some of us who live in the rural areas of the state that the problem is primarily an urban problem, in fact to be specific, a metropolitan problem of the City of Omaha. The fact is that increased health care cost, whether they are principally involved in one city or in several cities, directly affect the cost of health care of all citizens of the state. It is a known fact that the insurance costs for outstate Nebraska are higher because of the overbuilding of certain type of facilities in metropolitan Omaha. I want to say at the outset I serve as a member of the Board of Directors of Blue Cross - Blue Shield Insurance Company and I recognize that there are some who would say that Schmit has a conflict of interest when I speak on behalf of a strict containment of health care cost. I want to say very frankly that I have been embarrassed that over the years the insurance carriers have not led the fight to contain health cost. It seems that because there is insulation between the patient and the health care provider through insurance procedures that there seems to be some lack of direct concern when health care costs continue to rise. I would suggest that if those of us who are hospitalized today or forced to use other facilities would have to pay those costs directly upon our leaving the facility, we would be more concerned with the cost of those facilities and the cost of those services. I do not chastise, I do not criticize the many fine providers we have in the state nor is that the intent of any of the members of the body who have co-signed these amendments with me.

SPEAKER MARVEL: You have one minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: I do suggest that today is the day in Nebraska when if we are going to get a handle we have to do it. I think that perhaps someone is going to say that we