

Health and Human Service Committee
LB 333
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Good afternoon, Senator Riepe, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Doug Weinberg (D-O-U-G W-E-I-N-B-E-R-G) and I am the Director of the Division of Children and Family Services in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). I am here to testify in support of LB 333, which was offered by my division as a budget modification to the biennial budget. The Governor has included this modification and has accounted for it in his budget recommendation to the Legislature.

LB 333 eliminates Nebraska's State Disability Program. The State Disability Program provides financial aid and medical assistance to persons who have received a disability determination denial by the Social Security Administration for the failure to meet the duration requirement of more than 12 months. Eligibility for the State Disability Program includes a disability determination made by the Division of Children and Family Services because of the Social Security Administration's disability denial.

Individuals who are determined eligible for the State Disability Program receive medical coverage and a cash assistance payment for no more than 12 months. After a 12-month duration of a disability has passed, an individual may be determined eligible for Medicaid through either a Social Security Administration or Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care disability determination.

The State Disability Program currently serves an average of 50 individuals a month and served a total of 147 individuals in 2016. There are currently 16 active participants as of January 15, 2017. Of these participants, 13 individuals will exit the program by June 30, 2017 and the remaining 3 individuals have eligibility beyond July 1st. The department will continue to provide coverage to these 3 individuals until their eligibility ends.

Medical assistance per recipient averages about \$5,833 per month and cash assistance per client averages approximately \$740 per month. This program has an annual budget of \$4.2 million. Nebraska is one of a handful of states that offer this type of program.

Alternative sources of support include private insurance, community resources such as County General Assistance and non-profit provider sliding fee scales, and other DHHS Economic Assistance programs if the client is eligible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and I urge your advancement of LB 333. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.