

the changes that will eventually, I think, occur in this country to get a hold of health care costs and to try and expand coverage so that all citizens have access to a basic level of health care. We don't have a public health infrastructure statewide. We have one of the lowest, maybe the lowest expenditures for public health services in the country. There may be a state or two lower than us, but we are not aware of that at this point. We do not have a planning mechanism in place to any degree to try and provide for the type of forward thinking and future orientation that we need to have which brings the different resources together, understand what we can accomplish together. We don't have that in place. We do...do not have a data system that gives us the basic information to know what the trends are, what the problems are and what the changes are that we need to make to get a hold of costs and try to also improve the quality of care. All those things are basic--information, planning, public health services--and none of those are to any degree present in our state right now. The plan at the national level can be found in the handout in one of the pages talking about managed competition. There the change that I think will eventually occur in this country is to set up regional health purchasing cooperatives that will be regionally based. They can be state or within a state regionally based efforts for consumers, purchasers of health care, to work together to identify the sort of health insurance coverage, health insurance that they want to provide for their citizens in that area of the state or states. You can have this planning mechanism, they're called HIPC's, established and then you go from there and you have the insurers and the health providers working together to develop accountable health plans and these plans will take together the various providers of health care and the insurers involved and meld them together so that they provide a seamless unit that will provide for the overall health of those people that are under their plan. There will be several plans offered under the different regions and this is what I think ultimately will happen under perhaps a national health board. That's all outlined for you in one page that I have in the handout. If we go to this type of concept, and I don't think there's any doubt that some change will occur and this is the most modest of changes that might occur, I think we have to recognize how we could adjust to prepare for that. And so the idea of having a regional planning mechanism will put in place for us the ability to get data, get information and put plans together that will then allow us, once we move to these HIPC's, these areas of purchasing of health care, to know what we