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Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
March 08, 2018

[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Health and Human Services met at 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 8, 2018, in Room 1510 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on a gubernatorial appointment. Senators present: Merv Riepe, Chairperson; Sue Crawford; Sara Howard; Mark Kolterman; Lou Ann Linehan; and Matt Williams. Senators absent: Steve Erdman, Vice Chairperson.

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you very much. This is the Health and Human Services Committee. I'm Merv Riepe. I serve as Chairman of this committee. And we have one function in front of us today and that is the confirmation hearing for Matthew Van Patton, the newly appointed director of the Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care. But before we get to that, I want all of you who are here to understand or to at least know who our committee members are. I'm going to start to my immediate right and I will talk a little bit slow because the far right member is now walking in. So, Senator, if you would introduce yourself.

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: Senator Mark Kolterman, District 24: Seward, York, and Polk Counties.

SENATOR HOWARD: Senator Sara Howard. I represent District 9 in midtown Omaha.

KRISTEN STIFFLER: Kristen Stiffler, legal counsel.

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Good afternoon. Senator Sue Crawford, District 45, which is eastern Sarpy, Bellevue, and Offutt.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Matt Williams, District 36: Dawson, Custer, and the north portion of Buffalo Counties.

SENATOR LINEHAN: Lou Ann Linehan, District 39, which is everything west of 180th Street in Douglas County.

TYLER MAHOOD: And Tyler Mahood, committee clerk.

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you very much. We also have a page who is very helpful and if we have anyone that has any handouts or anything else, make sure (inaudible) those. With that, I would like to proceed with this confirmation hearing so, Mr. Van Patton, will you please join us

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at the mic and introduce yourself? If you will, tell us a little bit about your background and then I'm sure that we're going to have some questions and so we will do that. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Very good, Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: In the microphone, if you would be kind enough, for the record, to state your name, spell it, and then proceed forward. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: (Exhibits 1 and 2) Very good. There is a prepared testimony. I will read that and cover all those things. Good afternoon, Chairman Riepe and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Matthew Van Patton, that's M-a-t-t-h-e-w V-a-n P-a-t-t-o-n, and I serve as the acting director of the Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care within the Department of Health and Human Services, DHHS. I want to thank Governor Ricketts and DHHS CEO Dr. Courtney Phillips for the opportunity to serve the citizens of Nebraska in this capacity. I also want to thank Rocky Thompson for his leadership as interim director of the division since the departure of Calder Lynch. Since assuming the role last week, I have had the pleasure of meeting you all and beginning a working relationship with you, my DHHS teammates, and other Medicaid stakeholders. I'm looking forward to continuing the Governor's vision of delivering a more efficient, effective, and customer-focused state government with you. As you know, I'm a native of South Carolina. I earned a Doctorate of Health Administration from the Medical University of South Carolina. Prior to my doctoral studies, I earned a Master of Arts in Strategic Communications and Leadership from Seton Hall University and a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from the University of South Carolina Upstate. I'm also a husband and a father. I look forward to having my wife, Dr. Brandi S. Van Patton, who is a long-term care consulting pharmacist, and our four children joining me in Nebraska this summer. My career has been focused in the areas of healthcare and public policy. Most recently, I was the president and CEO of Cadre Medical Technologies, LLC, a healthcare technology start-up I cofounded. The company is currently working on products in the transition of care space, as well as an HR tool for the healthcare...for healthcare staff placement. I have also spent time at the federal level, where I served as Congressman Trey Gowdy's chief of staff. Prior to my time on Capitol Hill, I was president and managing partner of Palmetto Public Affairs LLC, a public affairs firm focused on health policy. My career in the healthcare field began at the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System in South Carolina, where I served in a variety of roles, including the chief of staff to the board of directors, chief policy officer, director of innovations and planning, and administrator of the institutional review board. My academic training in healthcare administration, my professional experience in a large health system and a healthcare start-up, my leadership of a health policy focused government relations firm, and my tenure on Capitol Hill as a chief of staff have prepared me to lead the Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care in partnership with our department CEO, Dr. Courtney Phillips. Nebraska Medicaid has a team of dedicated and talented professionals who are ready and able to seize the opportunities before us.

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I look forward to building on the success of Heritage Health as we enter into the second year of operations. My team continues to work on major information technology initiatives, including updating the eligibility and enrollment system, and adding a data management analytics--DMA--system to improve Medicaid's capability to manage and utilize the vast amounts of data received every day. Additionally, I look forward to the continued work on our long-term care redesign plan to ensure the state's long-term care supports and services system is sustainable in the future. I'm excited about these opportunities and others that lie ahead. Nebraska Medicaid is a program that impacts the lives of not only 230,000 of the state's most vulnerable residents, but also our provider partners who ensure that the members are receiving the care they need to live meaningful lives. A tremendous effort has been made to establish and improve relationships and lines of communication with our providers, partners, and stakeholders. This will continue to be a high priority for me. Over the last week I have learned a lot about the great state of Nebraska, the department, and the division that I am honored to lead. I look forward to the opportunity to work with this committee and the other members of the Unicameral to fulfill the department's mission of helping people live better lives as part of Governor's Ricketts' vision to grow Nebraska. I am proud to be serving the people of Nebraska as part of the DHHS system. Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions members of the committee may have. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Thank you very much. I will call for questions. Senator Williams.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you, Chairman Riepe. And thank you, Mr. Van Patton, first of all, for being here today but, second of all, for coming here and moving your family here and all of those things. And we appreciate the opportunity that I've had and others to meet you this week and hear about your background and your resume. The area of interest that I have that I would like to hear some conversation with you with...and direction and vision deals with Heritage Health and the implementation and where we are today, some 14-15 months into the implementation, and how the, in your view--and I know you've been here a short period of time--what your current assessment is of the status of where we are, dealing with the providers, and where you think we can get to and your vision for that. In my particular case, I have five critical access hospitals... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: ...and numerous other providers in my district, but that's like many of us, as senators. So if you would just take a few minutes and address that topic, I would appreciate it. [CONFIRMATION]

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MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, sir. Happy to do so. Well, to be fair, I would, in full disclosure, tell you I've been here for only a week, so I've had a lot of briefings and met a lot of great people and I can see there is a tremendous amount of work underway in the state. Within the first two days, Senator, on Heritage Health I have met with all three of the CEOs and their immediate administrative team to get to know them personally and develop a relationship with them, just as I have had the opportunity with each of you to meet and get to know your name with a face. In terms of where they go, I think at this point I'm still surveying the topography and I'm looking at the wagon that I'm pulling to understand what resources are in the wagon to move forward. On that note, what I would like to say to you about my operating philosophy is, because of my background, there's been three executive themes that have carried me through in every job that I have: number one is a natural proclivity to plan; secondly, I have had a deep desire to innovate and to develop; and thirdly, I have a desire, because I'm a planner and because I like to innovate, you do not do those things in a vacuum; that means you collaborate and you communicate. And so for me, moving forward with each of those plans, and because of this need to develop and this need to innovate, that also has a high ROI proposition and understanding the value proposition of what we're doing within the space and what the return on investment of that work equates for the constituencies of the Medicaid program, which includes the taxpayers of Nebraska. It includes the beneficiaries, those patients and consumers who are using the services that we have, as well as the providers who are in the mix, and, frankly, also those MCOs who are in the market helping to provide that management function. So I'm going to be pushing them very, very hard on when we do something we need to understand what the ROI is on that and be able to set forth good ideas about where we go with data utilization, understanding the data wells that we have available, and taking that data and converting it to market information so that we can make smart decisions. There again that goes back to that planning background and working collaboratively so that you innovate and you do it with all stakeholders involved. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: I personally have been pleased with the attitude and the responsiveness of all three MCOs to requests that I've had and them coming to my district and actually participating with providers. You will find that this committee takes its oversight responsibilities very seriously and, in particular, with those things that directly hit us at home when we're back in our districts with providers that are trying to provide care. How comfortable are you with the idea of legislative oversight? [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: You know what, I'm comfortable with the idea of collaboration and communication. I think if we can speak to each other candidly and frankly about the stakeholders' perspective and understand what the needs are and the concerns are, I think we can do that in a very collegial and collaborative manner. And what you will get from me is what I have found to be a theme of the folks that I worked with already at DHHS is that there is a strong sense of collaboration and communication, and to, you know, have an open door policy that lets you get to me, get to Courtney Phillips, and express your concerns so we can work through those

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things together. So I would say my perspective is very simply at a very relational level. I want a relationship with you that lets us talk to each other candidly and address things that we collectively work together to make issues, address those issues in a proactive way, and to do it so that we get good outcomes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Senator Crawford, please. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you, Chairman Riepe. And thank you for being here. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: I'm just going to follow up on that conversation a bit before we move to other lines of questioning. So I do think there's been effort to engage in conversation and collaboration on this front; however, I do also think it's critical as a state when we establish a contract, when we set standards for performance,... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Uh-huh. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: ...and sanctions for not meeting standards of performance,... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Uh-huh. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: ...that we're very clear that we are holding to that... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Uh-huh. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: ...and the people know we're holding to those standards. So I want...and so some of us have been concerned that the sense of urgency for changes and improvements has not been as apparent because of a reluctance to impose sanctions. And

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meanwhile, the providers and patients experience the consequences of some of those challenges immediately. So I wonder if you would comment on that. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: To be fair, Senator, I think at this point I just am getting to know the systems and I'm getting to know the players and getting to know the intricacies of each of those individual plans. Understanding what's in those plans and expected of them based on what was done prior to my tenure is a priority for me, but at this point I can commit to gaining a greater understanding and an ongoing conversation with you. But about particulars, it would just be unfair for me to go down that path at this point. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: All right. I hear that in terms of particulars, but in terms of understanding your role as director is, in part, enforcing these contracts, is that a fair understanding? [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: In terms of what is set forward and what was articulated to them, I think it is an engagement. And certainly if there is a contractual obligation then we want to make sure that whatever is there is being adhered to. And I think we also want to have flexibility of understanding healthcare is changing, and it's changing dramatically. When we think about technology and where we are today, the smart phones that each of you, I see, have on the desk in front of you, it's really only ten years old, and what impact that has had on our day-to-day lives and the impact that's had on consumer trends. So staying ahead of where the consumer is, where needs are, and having the flexibility to work with those different care plans in a way that allow us to engage constituent needs as those things change, as we find new data that indicates new courses in direction, I am very interested in having those kinds of conversations with those CEOs. And thus far, I can tell you there seems to be a strong willingness, based on the questions I was able to ask of them, to work in that capacity. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Right. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: And, Senator Howard, please. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you, Senator Riepe. Thank you for visiting with us today. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR HOWARD: Can you tell me a little bit about your background with Medicaid?
[CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, ma'am, happy to do so. So I don't know if you've had the opportunity to read my vitae or not, but I started my career, Senator Howard, in a very large tertiary care center, the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System, which is a health service district, quasi-governmental entity, a subsidiary of the state of South Carolina. And so that very large center had a 12-county service area which--may surprise some of you--had both a very large urban center but it also reached into some very rural areas, mountainous, that had very difficult care paths to get access to various care centers. So we had a very diverse patient population there. In terms of my role, as it developed out throughout the course of the career, working and planning and then, particularly as I moved into public policy, and because of our corporate governance structure, abutted just about every level of government. County council approved our board of governors, our board of directors. So we had strong interface there. And then because South Carolina at the time was a Certificate of Need state, every element of our business planning that we did abutted the government and so strong interface with government there. But then in particular to Medicaid, representing the institution's position with the Medicaid agency as a provider, looking at different policy issues, looking at different payment issues and doing it in a way that was both collegial and recognition of what our needs were as an institution against their ability to work within the confines of the law that was prescribed to them, as well as the limited resources ascribed to them, so a very deep and long working relationship with those players in that capacity. And then moving, at the federal level, into the role with Congressman Gowdy, of course, dealing with those stakeholders in the state and then also at CMS, developing good relationships. And frankly, getting a good understanding of the various viewpoints that constituents had who were working with those different agencies I think has been very helpful to me as I have grown as an executive throughout my career, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: And just out of curiosity, is South Carolina a managed care state for their Medicaid? [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: South Carolina just has moved into that I believe, yes, ma'am.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: And did they include long-term care? [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Senator, I couldn't comment on that. I'm not sure what the particulars are. I've been withdrawn from that for a couple of years since I was working in the start-ups. I better refrain from addressing fact there. I can't speak to it. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR HOWARD: Okay. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: I can tell you have a question, so please go ahead. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Senator Crawford. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you, Chairman Riepe. And thank you for being here again and for answering questions. I do want to talk...have you talk to us a bit about long-term care... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Uh-huh. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: ...and about managed care and long-term care. I know you have worked on transitions in care and so you have some background in that. So I wonder if you would tell us if you've, similar, if you've been briefed and what your assessment is and what your vision would be in moving forward in long-term care. And also what you see as the pros or cons, in terms of if you are thinking of moving in terms of managed care, what some cautions or advantages are of doing that in long-term care. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Wow. That is a big question. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: That's a long question, yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: How much time do I have? (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Till 1:30. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Let me start that conversation by first telling you, I know there was dialogue around the concept of managed care. I know there's been some holds put on that. And beyond that, in terms of what's been done, what discussions have occurred here historically, I need to dig into that, Senator, and I will. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR CRAWFORD: Okay. So you can just focus on your... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: I will. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: ...vision and your perspective on long... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: So let me tell you... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: ...on managed care and long-term care. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thanks. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Let me tell you a little bit about how I see long-term care. And long-term care...and let's just look at it from the continuum-of-care perspective. For a very long time, there's been the acute-care side and the post acute-care side and there was this dividing line that went straight between. And of late, due to some changes at the federal level, I would say on the acute-care side there's been a greater awareness of the role of the post acute-care continuum, the post acute-care side of the continuum plays in maintaining good continuity of care. And so as patients transition out of hospitals and they transition to those various post acute-care environments, a very big point of my life over the last three years has been focused on that transition and what do the patients know about those market options that are there and being informed about them. And so how do you maintain that good continuity of care? What information, what data goes with, where does it go, and sort of what infrastructure is here to help maintain good continuity of care and transition of care? And then how does that play into what the provider role has and how does that then back into what we, as a payer, have in that? So at this point I think it would be simply fair for me to say that understanding where the state is, what the current business practices are, and then beginning to look at where things are going nationally, we can have a better conversation about where we need to go in the long-term care space, so... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: So there's the transition time, which when the access to information and coordination is critical, and then you have patients that then are in this post acute environment... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Certainly so. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR CRAWFORD: ...for a period of time. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Uh-huh. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: So I guess I would ask what you see as the critical needs or concerns of patients who are in that post acute-care setting and whether or not there are particular ways you think managed care fits or does not fit in that post acute-care situation. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Senator, at this point I, again, to be fair, I just don't know enough about what is currently in practice here in Nebraska, and I need to get a very deep dive into that landscape and I haven't simply had the time to do it yet. What I would ask of you is that you give me some time to do it. I'll commit to getting an understanding quickly and then perhaps we can have a follow-up conversation on this subject. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Right. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: But right now I just am...I'm just not informed enough to give you that answer. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Right. Well, I understand that you wouldn't, in terms of what's going on in Nebraska necessarily with only being here a week,... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Uh-huh. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: ...but I know you've worked in this space for a long time. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: So that's what...I was not necessarily asking you exactly what's happening in Nebraska but in that sense of what post acute-care and long-term care looks like. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Uh-huh. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: And how managed care fits into that kind of care generically, not necessarily in Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION]

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MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Uh-huh. And the post acute continuum from my experience, Senator, looks different all across the United States. Traditionally, you have LTACHs, which are in that marketplace, which are long-term, acute-care hospitals, which have a very specified length of stay. It has to be greater than 20 days and it has to have a particular type of acuity. Then you have, moving down from there, you have skilled nursing and in some instances you have step-down units. I don't know if that exists here or not. From there, you have rehab facilities. I don't know if that, in the traditional manner of which I'm accustomed to seeing those, is in this marketplace. And then you have, tied to that, home health and you have hospice, and what resources are tied there and how those things are tied together, at this point I simply don't know. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: That's fair. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: And so, you know, I can tell you I have a firm understanding of what that continuum, in traditional terms, looks like. But what resources are in this market, because you do have a pretty diverse market across the state being such a urban center on one side and then being rural and agribusiness on another, it's going to take me some time to get in and get that assessment. But bear with me. I'll get there pretty quick. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Okay. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Senator Williams, please. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you, Chairman Riepe. And I'd like to follow up just a little bit on that in a different direction. I might define myself as a planner, too, and an organizer, and I've always found that getting step one right is important before you go to step two. And I think as a...one of my concerns is when will we understand enough and be to the point with Heritage Health where we are now that we will be comfortable moving to another managed-care idea with long-term care? And how will you look at that to be able to say we've done this well enough now and we can take the experiences that we've had here and transfer those over? I have, and I think we all do, service providers that are scared to death now of what managed care in the long-term care space might mean to them. They weren't convinced it was a good idea to start with in long-term care and now they have their brothers and sisters running hospitals that have had certain level of experiences. So how would you view that? Are you in that same camp that we got to get this one working right, make it sound, make it practical, make it efficient before we take that next step? [CONFIRMATION]

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MATTHEW VAN PATTON: I can take you back to my planning days in the hospital and my planning days in a start-up which is tackle what is immediately in front of you and get market intelligence about what you've created and what it's doing and how it functions before you move to anything new. And when you do move to something new, be sure you engage those stakeholders so that you understand their perspective on their place in the marketplace and their concerns in the marketplace. So you know, I do think that again, Senator--you'll hear me say this--to be fair let's make sure we understand the history. There needs to be a respect for the history that has occurred in this subject area, what those concerns were, also where the market currently is and what's happening with those care plans, and then a conversation about where the market needs to go. Over the last three to four years, again going back to what's happened on the hospital provider side as it relates to the post acute-care side, changes in policy where you have readmissions rules, where the providers are penalized for readmissions, there's now a greater awareness in the acute-care community of the interplay between the hospital world and what happens in the post acute-care world. And that's relatively new in the marketplace. So those factors need to be taken into consideration and entered into the dialogue of how we collectively begin to map a way forward. So I would say again, going back to that planning background and going back to these firm lessons that Congressman Gowdy implanted into me which is, Matthew, collect the facts, collect the facts first, exercise reason over the facts with those who have greater minds than you, and then make a fair decision collectively to move forward. So I think that's probably the best I can give you in terms of how we'll proceed, Senator, and I hope that's a... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: ...a fair answer to you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: I have a question. Obviously, this is a major move. You're moving your family into a new job. I think one of our concerns, of course, gets to be as in an ideal world, if you're hiring a new head coach for a school, you're probably trying to look for somebody that's been a head coach at another one... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Sure. Sure. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: ...with the idea that you bring in some of that knowledge and expertise. [CONFIRMATION]

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MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Sure. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: My piece would be as I want to be able to feel very secure that on a Monday morning, with your family still in South Carolina, that I don't call your office and they say he's not coming back. (Laughter) You know what I'm saying? He didn't get on the plane down in South Carolina. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: No, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: So my piece gets to be, with that, is saying what kind of an orientation to get, because you'll get pressure to be up to speed very quickly (inaudible). [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: I already feel it, Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: So I don't know whether you're getting briefing books or... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: And I would also ask the question, do you have a source of other directors of other states, their medical...their directors of Medicaid... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Absolutely. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: ...that you can get sort of...not that we're not number one in it, but that you...you know, there's always this advantage of having a peer group that one can look to and say...and sometimes you'll develop that with one or two people that you can call to and say... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Absolutely. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: ...tell me the truth, good, bad, or indifferent, just tell me the truth... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR RIEPE: ...and I need to hear it now. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Good planners always know how to do good benchmarking and part of that is relationship development. And I would tell you this career that I've had has allowed me to make many relationships with lots of people who have done incredible things nationally. And just as I told you I had had the interface with the CEOs of the health plans, and forgive me, the week is a little squishy, I feel like I'm living in dog years right now for this past week, but one of the calls that was made was to a trade association that exists for Medicaid directors nationally. And so I've already had that interaction with the CEO of that organization. Have some questions that was asked of him. And so, you know, there's a developing relationship there I believe. There's a meeting of that group that's coming up in June and so I hope to go and make acquaintances with them. But I also do have the benefit of knowing a few past Medicaid directors in my life as well as a former director of CMS, and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, personally as well and can call on him and have that good counsel as well, as well as a very good peer group and some really great mentors who have been in the business of healthcare and get multiple perspectives as we make good decisions together. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: And not that we want you to live in the shadow of Calder Lynch who was here before,... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: ...but we can also provide you with his cell number that, in addition to Rocky Thompson, you could...I mean he will have some Nebraska experience. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: I beat you to it, Senator. I already have it and it's already in my favorites section, so. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. On your speed dial. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: And may be to his...it may be to his disappointment that I call him so often, but historical...you'll find I have a deep respect for historical perspective, so. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Well, the important thing here is that he left in very favorable terms so... [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR RIEPE: ...and I know he felt warmly about the state, about the program, and everything else. So I'm quite confident that he would be very accommodating to help make sure that the program succeeds and that you succeed in that as well. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Thank you. Chairman, let me finish responding to your question, if I may. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: You asked me about my family and our commitment to coming here. This was not a decision that we made very lightly. My family roots are deep, they go back 200 years, and parts of my family go back to the Lords Proprietor in South Carolina. So you know, we have a very deep history in that state and our family is there. But when this opportunity came, my wife, who's also a healthcare practitioner and an accomplished professional in her own right, she and I sat down together. This wasn't my decision; this wasn't her decision; this was our decision. And we looked at this opportunity, we looked at what was happening here and we said, you know, this is an opportunity for us to go and to challenge ourselves in different ways, to make new friends, to see a different perspective than what we've had professionally up unto this point. So this decision was not made in a vacuum. It was made with my life partner, with my wife, whom I love very deeply and is my best friend. So I promise you, even in those moments when I do go home to hug my babies and that time is over, that she's going to be the first one driving me back to the airport saying, we committed to do this (laughter) and we keep our word. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Could we get her number? (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: 864... (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: We don't want that on the record. Okay. Are there other questions from the committee? Senator Howard, please. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you, Senator Riepe. Just a small one. One of the things that Director Lynch was really good at, and not to scare you, he was really good at finding opportunities on a federal level that would change our state plan or modify it or make us eligible for more waivers. Are there any state plan amendments or waivers that you're really excited about that are coming down the pipe that would be appropriate for Nebraska? [CONFIRMATION]

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MATTHEW VAN PATTON: You know, Senator, I don't know of anything specific at this point simply because I haven't looked at it. I think you and I did talk about this when we had our one-on-one meeting. And so one of the things that CEO Phillips and I have already talked about is how do we continue to stay on top of that, to be proactive. Again, how do we exercise sound planning and make sure that we're always ahead of where the market is going and what opportunities are out there? And I will say, too, not every opportunity that presents itself will be right for us. And so from my perspective, my leadership style is going to be assessing things from the valuation proposition and what is the return on investment. Does it make sense for us? Can we achieve something that we can quantify and assess and show a success story and that there was a solid return on investment from it? So there may be things that come down the pipe that they are available, but they simply may not be right for us. I could give you an example. In my past life there were lots of government grants that used to come and different directors would bring them in, in the hospital and say we ought to go after this. And then when you began to look at it and you start to see how you have to fit that into your institution, you simply just don't have the resources to do it, to do it fully. And it just doesn't make sense for you. So I'll leave you with that perspective on my reply to your question. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: And then the last one is just nationally there's been a larger conversation about Medicaid transitioning to a block grant. Do you have an opinion about block grants or how they function in states? [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: No, ma'am, I don't. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Are there other questions from...Senator Crawford.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you, Chairman Riepe. I'd like to know what most excites you about coming here as the Medicaid director with your background and thinking about transitions of care and technology. What are you most excited about working on? [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: I obviously enjoy academic endeavors, which is why I decided to earn a doctorate, and I think I shared with you the theme of my doctoral dissertation which was the ethical, legal, and social implications of direct-to-consumer genetic testing. I chose that subject area simply because it represented what I consider a genesis of consumer engagement,

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empowerment in information management where the consumer has something that's directly given to them, where that information has traditionally been siloed and held in a paternalistic system. And so from my perspective is how are these systems going to begin to impact the way care is delivered. And that, Senator Crawford, that's a very academic answer and an interest. How I would translate that to my excitement of starting this job is we are now just in the healthcare arena beginning to understand the data potential, what can we collect, where do we collect it from, how do we collectively and collaboratively use it to make sound business decisions, strategy decisions, and, frankly, service decisions and focus that again going back to that management philosophy of using good market data to drive services so that we can quantify and say specifically we hope to achieve this ROI by pursuing it in this area. So that's...that, to me, is I think a very exciting time to enter into this role because healthcare is changing. It, in my...the way we did things when I first started I would not recognize those practices in the hospital if I were to go back into one today. It has rapidly changed over the last 20 years, and that's a good thing. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: It's an exciting thing. And that's very exciting to me, to be in a leadership role, to sit at a juncture where I do get the privilege of having an opportunity to collaborate with multiple constituencies, payers and providers and patients and legislators who are interested in policy changes as things move forward. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Senator Linehan, please. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: Thank you, Chairman Riepe. And thank you. Welcome to Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Thank you, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: I'm dying to ask how old your children are. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Oh, yes, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR LINEHAN: They're babies. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Well, I have four children, Senator. The oldest is 12. And we're an equitable household. There are two girls and two boys, and so everybody has a brother and everybody has a sister now. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: (Laugh) Very good. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: So that made the middle child, who is a boy, age 9, that made him very happy that the last child, age 3 months now, is a boy. And then we also have a three-year-old little girl. So a girl at 12; boy age 9, girl age 3, and baby boy age 3 months. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: So good. One more question. Can you give us your thoughts in the importance of behavioral and mental health being part of the whole package here with managed care? [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Senator, I'll give you not...and again, I'm going to say to be fair, I just haven't been read into all of the particulars of what has happened historically or where the state is with those services at this point. It's been very high level. What I can give you is my experience in dealing with these issues in past jobs and past lives. Mental health and behavioral health has been a challenge across the continuum of care in every state in the nation and I would imagine Nebraska would be no different in that regard. I do think, looking out, finding those best practices where you can integrate mental health to make some better coordination-of-care decisions seems to make sense to me, but how it would be done here, historically I don't know what's been to comment on particulars of the how to. But I think that would be a good suggestion of where is it now and how do we begin to integrate in other care models and how do we begin to create some efficiencies. I also like the idea of technology being folded into that where it's telemedicine, telehealth at this point, as it pertains to service delivery in that space. So beyond that, simply to say again another area that I need to spend some time getting up to speed on and you will have my commitment to get there but I'll leave it at a very high level in terms of a reply at this point, and make a notation, for those who are in the room who are helping me take notes, that we need to follow up on these things... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: ...in due course. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR LINEHAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Yes, ma'am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you. Very good. Are there other questions? It appears not. I would simply, on behalf of the committee, say we want to welcome you and your wife and your children, and we will embrace them with open arms and give them a good Midwest welcome. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that kindness very much. My wife said to extend to you, thank you for letting me come. (Laugh) And I say the same and I'm looking forward to having them here this summer and they're looking forward to joining us. And it's been nice to come into a state to see so many smiling faces and to meet people so eager to work collaboratively, to communicate with one another, and to respect the difference of opinion that may exist within the body politic and over hard issues and work that is ahead. I don't look at anything as too difficult. I just look at it as how much time can we put together to get things done and what can we prioritize to move forward first. So thank you for this grand opportunity. I appreciate it very much. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you. Are there...if there are no additional questions, that will conclude our confirmation hearing on Dr. Matthew Van Patton. [CONFIRMATION]

MATTHEW VAN PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: (Recorder malfunction) Any opponents? Anyone in a neutral capacity? Hearing none, we are concluded. Thank you. We need to get that right for the record. [CONFIRMATION]