

Medicaid Expansion Discussed During Falls City Open House

(KTNC) - First District Nebraska State Senator Dan Watermeier hosted a series of open house meetings around southeast Nebraska Saturday.

At a stop in Falls City Saturday afternoon, Watermeier was asked about Medicaid expansion in the state. Watermeier serves on the Health and Human Services Committee, which will consider legislation on the issue. He says the discussion around expanding Medicaid to an additional 55,000 Nebraskans is complicated, with arguments both for and against.

One concern he says is whether there are enough health care providers in rural Nebraska to handle the expansion. (play audio :32)

Watermeier says there are programs such as the Rural Health Opportunities Program that could help address the shortage. R-HOP is a collaborative effort of the state colleges and University of Nebraska Medical Center that encourages students from rural Nebraska interested in a health care career to return to practice in rural Nebraska after graduating.

Watermeier says a lot of the discussion on Medicaid expansion is about the potential cost. (play audio :40)

Watermeier says it's unlikely the state could have the infrastructure in place in two years to handle expanded Medicaid. (play audio :24)

The Medicaid expansion bill will be brought forward in the Health and Human Services Committee this Thursday, and Watermeier expects a vote on the bill will occur one or two weeks later.

Watermeier stopped at Schulenberg Bakery in Falls City. He also held open houses in Nebraska City, Auburn, and Humboldt.