

Apr. 10 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Statement on the Department of Health and Human Services Report on Prescription Drug Coverage

April 10, 2000

Today's release of the Department of Health and Human Services report on prescription drug coverage, spending, and pricing practices provides further evidence of the need for a voluntary, affordable Medicare prescription drug benefit that is available to all beneficiaries. This report makes clear that uninsured seniors not only lack prescription drug coverage but also are denied the significant discounts and rebates that those with coverage receive. This price gap is wide and growing. It's time to level the playing field for both coverage and prices for all of America's seniors.

Although the HHS report provides the most comprehensive analysis to date on prescription drugs, there is still much that needs to be learned and conveyed to the general public and to policymakers on this important issue. For this reason, I am also announcing that the administration will hold a national conference this summer on drug pricing and discounting practices and their impact on Medicare beneficiaries and pharmaceutical innovation. I believe this conference will help us determine how the best

purchasing and quality improvement practices from the private sector can be incorporated into a Medicare prescription benefit.

I am encouraged that there is growing support from both parties to address the prescription drug cost and coverage problems that burden our Nation's seniors and people with disabilities. As today's report makes clear, the challenge of prescription drug coverage for the uninsured and underinsured Medicare populations is one that afflicts millions of beneficiaries of every age and income level. However, we must make certain that any legislative proposal is more than a benefit in name only. As I have said repeatedly, the only way this issue can be adequately remedied is through a Medicare drug benefit that is voluntary, affordable, accessible, and administered competitively, using the most successful private practices to negotiate discounts on behalf of seniors. It should be enacted in the context of broader reform that modernizes and strengthens the program. I believe that the release of today's report shows how vital it is to reach this goal.

Statement on the Announcement of a Summit Meeting Between South Korea and North Korea

April 10, 2000

I welcome the announcement that the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will hold a historic first summit in June. Direct dialog between the two Koreas is something we have long advocated and is

fundamental to solving the problems of the Korean Peninsula. This announcement is testimony to the wisdom and long-term vision of President Kim Dae-jung's engagement policy. I congratulate both leaders on their decision to meet.

Statement on the Greek Legislative Elections

April 10, 2000

I congratulate Konstandinos Simitis, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, and his PASOK party for their victory in the Greek leg-

islative elections on April 9. I also applaud Konstandinos Karamanlis and the New Democracy Party for running a fine campaign. The

elections demonstrated yet again the vitality of democracy in the land of its birth and should serve as an example to the rest of the world.

The election results and the debates fostered by the campaign show a broad consensus in favor of the course Greece has chosen: economic prosperity at home and fuller integration

with the European Union; leadership in building stability in the Balkans and southeastern Europe; improved relations with Turkey; and progress toward a just and lasting settlement on Cyprus. On these and other issues, the United States pledges its continuing support and cooperation.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Iraq's Compliance With United Nations Security Council Resolutions *April 10, 2000*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1), and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council. My last report, consistent with Public Law 102-1, was dated January 7,

2000. I shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks at a Maryland State Bill Signing Ceremony in Annapolis, Maryland *April 11, 2000*

Thank you very much, Governor and Mrs. Glendening, Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Secretary of State Willis, Attorney General Curran, Mr. Speaker, President Miller. I also want to acknowledge the Members of Congress who are here, who are on the right side of this fight, Senator Mikulski, Representative Morella, and Representative Wynn. You can be very proud of what all three of them are doing on this issue.

I thank the members of the legislature, the overwhelming numbers of Democrats and the brave Republicans who joined you to pass this legislation. I thank the students from the Young Kids Against Violence and the Students Together Against Guns and from Largo and Potomac schools for their work. And I want to say a little more about each of you in a moment.

Let me say, I think it is fitting that we are here today in this magnificent old place where

our forebears walked the halls more than 200 years ago. It's a site of firsts. The Speaker mentioned George Washington resigning his commission just a few steps from here. The State House was also the site of the ratification of the Treaty of Paris, which officially put an end to the Revolutionary War and marked the birth of our new Nation.

Today we are trying to end another kind of war, an ongoing struggle to reduce the staggering toll of violence on our citizens and especially on our children. The Maryland Legislature once again has made history, and I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. I came up here today more than anything else to say thank you.

I applaud first your Governor. I remember after I first met him—you know, he's sort of low-key; you have to keep listening to Parris Glendening. [Laughter] But I must say, he