

referred to Mayor John F. Street of Philadelphia, PA. A reporter referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Statement on the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy *July 13, 2000*

Today I am pleased to announce the appointment of the Chair and the first 10 members of the White House Commission on Alternative Medicine. This Commission, created by an Executive order on March 8, 2000, is charged with developing a set of legislative and administrative recommendations to maximize the benefits of complementary and alternative medicine for the general public.

Each year tens of millions of Americans receive alternative therapies. The great potential and possible perils associated with the use of complementary and alternative medicine have been well documented. There is no doubt that these therapies should be held to the same standard of scientific rigor as more traditional health care interventions.

If we are going to hold complementary and alternative therapies to an appropriate standard of accountability, we need to invest in research so health care professionals and consumers can make informed judgments about the appropriate use of these services. In that vein, we have worked with Senator Harkin and a bipartisan coalition of Members of Congress to establish the NIH Center for Complementary and Alter-

native Medicine to invest resources in scientific analysis to make such information available.

But we need to do more. We need to be able to use information about alternative therapies to set the national agenda for the education and training of health care practitioners in this field and provide recommendations for advisable coverage policies for alternative therapies.

I particularly want to applaud the leadership of Senator Tom Harkin, Senator Barbara Mikulski, Senator Arlen Specter, Senator Harry Reid, and Congressman Peter DeFazio in advocating for and finding funding for this Commission. There is no question in my mind that we would not be making this announcement without their tireless efforts. I also want to thank Secretary Shalala for her commitment to explore all avenues of scientific discovery to help ensure that Americans have access to the most accountable and responsive health care system possible.

As we enter into the 21st century, we need to get better information to ensure American families have access to the best and most cost-effective health care. I know I join the Congress, the policymakers, and the American public in saying how much we look forward to the results of the Commission's work.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Debt-Relief Legislation *July 13, 2000*

While the bill passed today underfunds vital international priorities and should not become law, the Waters amendment passed by the House of Representatives increasing funding to the Heavily Indebted Poorest Countries (HIPC) initiative is an enormously encouraging step. Relieving the world's poorest nations of crushing debt obligations will help free up crucial funds

for education, health care, and basic human needs. Unsustainable debt continues to help keep too many poor countries and poor people in poverty. I urge Congress to pass the full amount that I have requested for debt relief this year. As it stands, this bill still falls far short of what is necessary to fully implement this initiative.