

*The President.* One of the reasons Arabs and Israelis continue to look to the United States for help is that we protect their confidences. I have great respect for Chairman Arafat, and I'm sure you understand that I'm not going to start now by talking publicly about letters either from him or Prime Minister Barak.

#### *Further Negotiations*

*Q.* Are you willing to issue an unconditional invitation for Arafat and Prime Minister Barak to come to Washington and give peace another shot?

*The President.* I'm willing to do anything if it will help Israelis and Palestinians reach an agreement. At the same time, I know that the two sides need to reflect on what happened at Camp David and work together. Without an Israeli-Palestinian foundation on the substance of the issues, the United States cannot play its role effectively. That process got a big boost at Camp David. It needs to be continued now.

Both leaders must be ready to make historic decisions.

#### *Egypt's Role in the Peace Process*

*Q.* There has been criticism of Egypt's role. What is your view?

*The President.* The fact is that all that has happened since the original Camp David in September 1978, including Madrid and Oslo, is a vindication of the courageous and visionary policy of Egypt. Egypt was a pioneer for peace and continues to be a key partner for the United States. We agree on the fundamentals of the peace process, and we will not be able to reach an Israeli-Palestinian agreement on these core issues without close consultation with Egypt. We are engaged in such a process today.

NOTE: In his responses, the President referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel. The questions and answers were released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 11.

## **Statement on Electronic Transmission of Health Care Transaction Claims** *August 11, 2000*

Every day, tens of thousands of health claims are submitted to insurers and other payers by our Nation's health care providers. These billing forms are often incomprehensible, inconsistent, and duplicative, frequently serving little useful purpose. They waste the time and financial resources of our talented health care professionals and can result in higher premiums and lower quality of care.

With today's release of new national standards for electronic claims for health care transactions, we are taking a major step towards eliminating burdensome, time-consuming, and wasteful paperwork that costs the Nation's health care system billions of dollars each year. In fact, the Department of Health and Human Services estimates that these administrative simplification regulations will achieve a net savings to the health care system of nearly \$30 billion over the next 10 years.

As we use our new technology to streamline our health care system, we will maintain our absolute commitment to protect the sanctity and privacy of medical records. The standards we are releasing today will be required to be implemented consistent with the privacy regulation that we will be finalizing later this year.

Today's action is a win for patients and health care providers alike. When we save money from the health care system, we succeed in keeping premiums down. When we reduce paperwork requirements on our physicians, they have more time to spend with their patients. Improving quality, eliminating wasteful spending, and maintaining our values should be the goals we strive to achieve in health care and every public policy we pursue. I believe that we are achieving all three goals with the release of today's new standard.

## Statement on the Workforce Investment Act *August 11, 2000*

Two years ago this week I signed the bipartisan Workforce Investment Act (WIA), launching an historic initiative that Vice President Gore and I first proposed in 1992 as a way to streamline and bring greater accountability to our Nation's job training system. Today, with these reforms underway in all 50 States, we reach another key milestone by adopting the final rule implementing the major provisions of this landmark act. I congratulate our Federal partners, Congress, the States, local communities, businesses, and American workers on how far we have come.

Largely as a result of WIA's reforms, States now have established 1,200 One-Stop Career Centers to provide job seekers and employers in each community with a single, customer-focused point of entry to a wide range of employment services. Developed with extensive input from the many people with a stake in our job training system, the final rule provides additional direction to State and local partners while pre-

serving their planning and operating flexibility. The rule also gives State and local partners guidance on creating individual training accounts that allow workers to choose the training that meets their needs.

Unfortunately, currently proposed congressional funding for workforce development programs, including the administration's Fathers Work/Families Win initiative, falls far short of the amount needed both by American businesses to meet the growing demand for skilled workers and by working families to gain access to lifelong learning. WIA provides broad access to employment opportunities, often for people with disabilities or others who have been excluded, and it should be properly funded. I call on Congress to fully fund the bipartisan program it passed 2 years ago so that all Americans can participate in today's era of economic opportunity. With WIA up and running across the country, now is the time to invest in the system we built together.

## Statement on Improving Access to Services for Persons With Limited English Proficiency *August 11, 2000*

Today I am issuing an Executive order to help people with limited English proficiency (LEP) access Federal services. Many people who are eligible for Federal services cannot effectively use those services because they are not proficient in English. The Executive order directs Federal agencies to improve the language-accessibility of their programs by December 11, 2000. This initiative complements our commitment to promoting programs to help individuals learn English.

I am concerned that language barriers are preventing the Federal Government and recipients of Federal financial assistance from effectively serving a large number of people in this country who are eligible to participate in their programs. Failure to systematically confront language barriers can lead to unequal access to Federal benefits based on national origin and

can harm the mission of Federal agencies. Breaking down these barriers will allow individuals with limited English proficiency to more fully participate in American society.

This Executive order directs Federal agencies to break down language barriers by implementing consistent standards of language assistance across agencies and among all recipients of Federal financial assistance. Under this flexible standard, agencies and recipients must take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to their programs and activities, taking into account a variety of considerations. Among the factors to be considered are the number or proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service population, the frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program, the nature and importance of the service provided by the program, and the available resources.