

TRIBUTE TO VERA PHANELSON

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Vera Phanelson, a tireless worker and member of my district. Because of her commitment to children with mental illnesses, Ms. Phanelson's career has centered on providing care and assistance to the children who are working to overcome the challenges of these illnesses.

As a counselor at Blueberry Day Care Center and an educational assistant for the board of education and the Madison Day Care Center, Ms. Phanelson has provided a great service to our community and I would like to extend my thanks for all of her efforts. Also, she has been a long-standing charter member of the East New York Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.; a member of good standing at Holy Sacred Baptist Church; and a worker at the Rosetta Gaston Democratic Club in Brooklyn. It is people like Ms. Phanelson, and thousands like her, that allow communities such as East New York to thrive and grow.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege for me to be able to pay tribute to Ms. Vera Phanelson. Although it pained me to hear that she will be moving out of my district to Maryland, I am sure, through her work in the district, she has sown the seeds for others in our community to follow in her footsteps and provide the needed services for those who live there.

A POINT-OF-LIGHT FOR ALL AMERICANS: THELMA MARTIN

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute an individual who is a tireless advocate for her community—Mrs. Thelma Martin. At every critical juncture, she amasses the resources and summons the courage to challenge wrongdoings and embellish the lives of countless children, families, and citizens. She embarks on civic and community endeavors with the same fervor in which she attacks political and social ills. Upon any evaluation of her contributions, it is difficult to determine where her civic and professional responsibilities begin and end. Thelma Martin is a great POINT-OF-LIGHT whose work must be celebrated.

As a native New Yorker, Mrs. Martin's professional life has always been consumed by a relentless devotion to community. Currently, she is the executive director of the Renaissance Development Corp. In this capacity, Thelma Martin's accomplishments include development of various successful national, state-, and local-sponsored programs including the Youth Development Delinquency and Recreation program, Commercial Revitalization program, Community Achievement project, Work Incentive program, and the Structured Educational Support program.

Moreover, she is responsible for developing the first youth conference. Mrs. Martin also focuses her organization's endeavors on parental involvement projects, cultural trips, and practical workshops.

Thelma Martin's present record of public service is rivaled only by her past appointments. She has served as the executive director of the South Brooklyn Community Corp. Under her administration, Mrs. Martin sponsored and organized the First Annual South Brooklyn Summer Festival for area merchants and residents—now known as the "Atlantic Antic". She also supervised 19 delegate agencies and 254 employees and had the largest number of area residents enrolled in college out of the 26 other area poverty agencies.

Despite her professional demands, Mrs. Martin still finds time to excel in civic duties. She has served as the superintendent of the Cuyler Warren Street Church Sunday School, member of Community Board No. 16, member of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, member of the New York State Association of Renewal and Housing Officials, member of the 76th Precinct Council, vice president of the New York City Association of Executive Directors, chairperson of the board of directors of the Jules Michael Day Care Center, council president of the Cuyler Warren Methodist Church and chairperson of the Pastor Public Relations Committee.

Unsurprisingly, Thelma Martin's work has not gone unacknowledged; she is the recipient of more than two dozen awards and commendations from many public officials and organizations. Among her honors are congressional awards from the 12th Congressional District and a senatorial award; an award from the New York State Democratic Party for her duties of community services; and awards from the Youth Committee Board No. 16, Ladies of Planning Board No. 16, and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She was also recognized for helping to enrich the lives of more than 5 million children and their families.

A strong sense of family is another characteristic of Thelma Martin's life. She has been married to Woodrow Martin for 38 years and has two sons, Glen David and Mark Anthony; one grandson, Glen, Jr.; and one daughter-in-law, Ingrid.

Inarguably, Thelma Martin has conducted herself as a model citizen. She has accepted the rights, duties, and responsibilities of a democratic society with deliberation, fortitude, and compassion. She has chosen to exercise her inner power to the fullest possible extent, having utilized her actions to improve the lives of individuals, enhance her community, challenge institutions, and demand reform of adverse practices. She is a great POINT-OF-LIGHT for all of the people of America to appreciate and admire.

HMO DRUG RESTRICTIONS: LOOK OUT PATIENTS

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, following is an article from the October 16, 1997, Dallas Morning News regarding the Harris Methodist Health Plan's financial incentives restricting what doctors prescribe for their patients.

I'm glad I'm not in that plan—and if I were in it, I'd sure get out if I could. The plan's financial incentives on doctors not to prescribe violate the spirit, if not the letter, of the Medicare law limiting the type and amount of financial incentive that a plan can place on a doctor to withhold care.

This Texas example is a classic of why we need managed care consumer protection reforms—ASAP.

[From the Dallas Morning News, Oct. 16, 1997]

HMO FINES ANGERING PHYSICIANS; STATE REGULATORS EXAMINE HARRIS PRESCRIPTION POLICY

(By Charles Ornstein)

A growing number of Fort Worth- and Arlington-area doctors are accusing Harris Methodist Health Plan of penalizing them for writing too many prescriptions, and the controversy is drawing the attention of state insurance regulators.

The doctors say the health maintenance organization has fined them thousands of dollars this year because they exceeded a predetermined pharmacy budget, which is included in their contracts with Harris.

They contend that the company's policy, enforced for the first time this year, places the financial bottom line above the patients' best interest.

"My concern is that one day, I or another physician may withhold some care for financial reasons," said Dr. J. Mike White, a family practitioner in Joshua, south of Fort Worth, who had to repay Harris \$28,000 this year. "That's inappropriate and that's unethical."

Harris officials defended their system Wednesday but said they will increase the allowable pharmacy expenses next year in response to the doctors' concerns. The officials said the network's 6,600 physicians should work harder to cut their costs.

"I think we are in a situation where we are not doing things as efficiently as possible and we need to change our practice patterns," said Dr. Ramiro Cavazos, chairman of Harris Methodist Select, the network's exclusive physician group. "The problem is that we have a premium, and we have to live within that premium."

The Texas Department of Insurance said Wednesday that it has begun a review of Harris' incentive policies. Spokesman Jim Davis said he does not know how long the review will last but said it comes after a physician complained to the state.

"Whenever questions are raised about the operations of HMOs or insurance companies in Texas, it's our job to look into the situation," Mr. Davis said. "This is nothing really special."

The Texas Medical Association board has said that it has serious concerns about the effect of the prescription limits on patient care.

"Our concern is that the financial incentives and disincentives appear to be really too severe in the sense of encouraging doctors to provide necessary care," said Rocky Wilcox, general counsel of the state medical group.

"Nobody has really looked to see whether these patients were provided with unnecessary medication or whether they really needed it."

Last week, the 18-doctor Fort Worth Clinic joined a lawsuit against Harris that was filed in August by physician Richard Hubner. Dr. Hubner, who practices in Springtown, in Parker County, settled his claims against Harris last month after officials agreed to stop penalizing him for writing too many prescriptions.

The clinic's court petition alleges that the health network provides an incentive for doctors to deny care and reject sick patients, which would be a violation of state law.

"I don't think that you would want your doctor to think about whether it would cost him money personally if he prescribes medicine that you need," said David Humphrey, the clinic's administrator. "We think it's wrong, and we've been advised that it's illegal."

Under Harris' contracts with its physicians, the company pays doctors a set monthly fee to provide all necessary care to each Harris HMO patient. That fee, which is a percentage of each member's premium, ranges from \$11.87 to \$15.19 per month.

In addition, doctors are entitled to spend 9.6 percent of each premium dollar on prescriptions. If they exceed that budget, the contract requires them to pay Harris 35 percent of the additional cost. If they spend less than the budget allowed, they receive a bonus.

Harris has awarded \$338,000 in bonuses during the last quarter, Dr. Cavazos said. He didn't disclose the amount of fines assessed to doctors.

According to a confidential memo obtained by The Dallas Morning News, Harris doctors exceeded their pharmacy budget by more than 26 percent last year. Internists, who generally treat sicker patient, surpassed their budget by 46 percent, the memo says.

"I've been amazed at the number of people who have been suffering and paying this in silence," said Robin Weinman, executive director of the Tarrant County Medical Society. "I don't know how they're surviving, quite frankly."

Internist Karen Spetman said she was billed \$10,000 by Harris in July for exceeding her pharmacy budget during the first six months of the year. That accounts for about 15 percent of the fees she has received from Harris, she said.

"Nobody works for free," she said. "But right now, that is what I'm doing. I'm not even working for free—I'm working for a negative number. I am paying money for the privilege of practicing medicine."

Dr. Spetman, the only Harris internist in the Fort Worth suburb of Willow Park, said she has met repeatedly with Harris representatives to explain her problems. When she reviewed her patient charts and prescriptions with a Harris pharmacy director, she was told that she was making the correct medical decisions, she said.

Harris officials did not contest Dr. Spetman's claims. But they said doctors in the system need to realize that increased efficiency and short-term sacrifices will eventually lead to long-term savings.

"When you get a bill, you're hopping mad," said Harris spokeswoman Lisa O'Steen. "But if you look at it in the long term, because Harris has such a high retention of patients and doctors, this is a savings you see over a long period of time."

TRIBUTE TO SPECIAL AGENT VITO S. DeMARCO

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Special Agent Vito S. DeMarco of the U.S. Treasury Department, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, on the occasion of his retirement. After 30 years of diligent service in law enforcement, Special Agent

DeMarco has built a distinguished reputation of protecting the United States and her citizens.

Special Agent DeMarco began his career with the Office of Naval Intelligence in 1967, after graduating from Fairfield University in Fairfield, CT. After his assignment to the Naval Investigative Service in New York City, Special Agent DeMarco spent the last 28 years of his tenure with the Boston Field Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

During his tenure with BATF, Special Agent DeMarco distinguished himself by serving on several task forces, including the Sky Marshall Program during the 1970's. He has made his expertise available to the U.S. Secret Service, serving on protection details during the Presidential campaigns of Presidents Ford, Carter, Bush, and Clinton. In addition, he has contributed to the protection details of several foreign heads of state and conducted investigations into illicit firearms trafficking and numerous explosives and arson cases.

Special Agent DeMarco also served with distinction in the U.S. Navy Reserves, from which he retired in 1996 with the rank of commander. His 33 years of naval service included his activation for the Persian Gulf War, in which he commanded a special security division.

Special Agent DeMarco also demonstrated his steadfast commitment to his country and community by volunteering to work with the Marine Cadets of America. Mr. DeMarco has given a great deal of his time and energy to this organization, and has served on the board of its national office.

Law enforcement personnel serve our country by putting their lives on the line, ensuring the safety of our citizens. We owe them all a great debt of gratitude, so it is with the deepest appreciation and pride that I salute Special Agent DeMarco today.

U.S. EXTENDS ITS LEADING EFFORT TO REMOVE WORLD'S LAND MINES

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member commends to his colleagues the editorial which appeared in the Omaha World-Herald on November 4, 1997.

U.S. EXTENDS ITS LEADING EFFORT TO REMOVE WORLD'S LAND MINES

The U.S. government has made a considerable effort to prevent people around the world from being killed or injured by anti-personnel mines. To the credit of the Clinton administration, the United States is about to do more.

President Clinton has announced a U.S.-led campaign to rid the world of the devices in the next dozen years. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said the United States will contribute \$80 million this year to an international effort to clean up minefields, double the U.S. contribution the previous year.

Some people might think a contradiction exists. The U.S. government is the major holdout from a proposed treaty banning mines. Clinton has said that the United States won't sign unless the treaty is amend-

ed to allow continued use of the devices along the U.S.-guarded demilitarized zone separating North and South Korea. A committee that won the Nobel Peace Prize for pushing for a global anti-mine treaty has treated the Clinton policy—and the president himself—with scorn and contempt.

The biggest problem with land mines has its roots in the past, however, not in the future behavior of the United States. An estimated 100 million of the explosive devices remain in the ground in more than 60 countries, from Bosnia to Angola and from El Salvador to Cambodia. Many of the mines were planted in haste by guerrilla forces—people who neither sign global treaties nor leave any record of where they lay their mines.

About 26,000 people are killed or injured by the devices every year, many of them children at play. This is the problem that the plan announced by Clinton and Ms. Albright is designed to solve by 2010.

American forces have already drastically curtailed their use of land mines. Part of the reason is that U.S. mines caused many U.S. casualties. The mines still in use are mostly manufactured to lose their explosive force after a few weeks. The locations are carefully recorded. The mines are removed when no longer needed.

As to U.S. reservations about the treaty: The situation on the Korean peninsula has few parallels anywhere in the world. A superpower that has been entrusted by peace-loving nations—and is expected by them—to prevent war in Korea is hardly going to add to the unmapped minefields that are causing the 26,000 casualties a year. The United States isn't out of line with its request to continue using land mines in Korea if it signs the treaty.

Indeed, treaties don't bind guerrilla forces. They are often ignored by aggressors. A land mine treaty, even if signed by the United States, would guarantee little in the long run.

On the other hand, an international cleanup of minefields could do a lot to reduce mine-related casualties. The campaign to find mined areas and remove the explosives safely is a noble humanitarian effort. U.S. participation is well worthwhile.

ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE HEALTH CENTER PROGRAMS

SPEECH OF

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 29, 1997

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from, Illinois, Congressman DANNY K. DAVIS, for sponsoring this special order this evening. I am very pleased to join him in this discussion on an issue of great importance to the Congress and this Nation—community health centers.

The recently enacted Balanced Budget Act of 1997 will make nearly \$13 billion in Medicaid cuts from fiscal year 1998 through fiscal year 2002. This will severely impact the way in which health care is financed and delivered across the Nation. The numbers of uninsured Americans and the cost of health care services are continuing to rise. Yet, the availability of financial resources to address these concerns is diminishing. Thus, we must carefully consider community health centers as a model of community-directed health care for our changing health care system.