

GOOD LUCK AND CONGRATULATIONS TO MAJOR GENERAL MORRIS J. BOYD

**HON. CHET EDWARDS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 7, 1999*

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate a great Army officer and soldier—Major General Morris J. “Morrie” Boyd—and thank him for his contributions to the Army and the country.

General Morrie Boyd will retire in June after a long and distinguished career. He is a consummate professional whose performance in over three decades of service, in peace and war, has personified those traits of courage, competency and commitment that our nation has come to expect from its Army officers.

Morrie entered service on the 6th of April 1965. He was selected to attend Officer Candidate School and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1966. He served as an artillery officer in Vietnam from October 1966 to June 1968 and again from April 1970 to March 1971. While deployed to Vietnam, he served as an assistant firing platoon leader, executive officer of a battery, commanded a howitzer battery, commanded a platoon from the 21st Aviation Company, and was the Intelligence and Security Officer for the 212th Aviation Battalion.

Morrie was again deployed for combat during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. From December 1990 to May 1991, he served as the commander of the 42nd Field Artillery Brigade in Saudi Arabia.

He came to Washington in the mid-90s to serve as the Chief, Army Legislative Liaison from June 1995 to June 1997. From June 1995 to June 1997, he ably assisted the Army's senior leadership in dealing with Members of Congress and their staffs. He was very focused on helping elected officials and their staffs understand the needs of the Army as it transformed itself from a forward deployed force to a power projection force.

Morrie most recently served as the Deputy Commanding General for III Corps and Fort Hood. Throughout his career, he focused his talent and energy to improve the areas of Warfighting, Training, Modernization, Mobilization, and Quality of Life for soldiers and their families.

On a personal note, I am pleased to call Morrie a close, personal friend. He is a role model for all of us: a man of integrity, decency and compassion.

Let me also say that every accolade to Morrie must also be considered a tribute to his family, his wife of 30 years, Maddie and his son, Ray. As a wife and a mother Maddie has been a true partner in all of his accomplishments.

General Boyd's career has reflected a deep commitment to our nation, which has been characterized by dedicated selfless service, love for soldiers, and a commitment to excellence. I ask Members to join me and offer our heartfelt appreciation for a job well done over the past thirty years and best wishes for continued success, to a great soldier and friend of Congress—General Morris J. Boyd.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE PATIENT ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1999

**HON. JIM RAMSTAD**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 7, 1999*

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, new advances in medical technology are improving the lives of millions of Americans every day:

New implantable devices are restoring and repairing ailing organs.

New diagnostics are permitting rapid detection of life-threatening diseases and allowing physicians to peer inside the human body without surgery.

Miniature surgical devices are allowing patients to recover more quickly and new technologies are empowering patients to monitor and test their conditions from home and reduce or eliminate pain.

Yet many of these life-saving and life-enhancing technologies remain unavailable to the people who need them most, America's nearly 40 million Medicare beneficiaries. This is because of the complex, interwoven systems that Medicare uses to evaluate, approve and pay for new medical technologies.

That's why I am introducing “The Medicare Patient Access to Technology Act” to make targeted adjustments in the technical methods and systems that Medicare uses to adopt and pay for new medical products. By correcting and coordinating the payment levels and identification codes, the bill will improve access to needed therapies for millions of Medicare patients, both today and in the future.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reviews medical technologies to ensure that they are “safe and effective.” After passing through FDA, such technologies must also be deemed “reasonable and necessary” by HCFA for them to be integrated into the portfolio of services that Medicare makes available to its beneficiaries.

After being approved for coverage, technologies must receive a “procedure code,” a four or five digit identifying code that health care providers use in submitting claims to payers.

Finally, Medicare must set a payment level for each technology and treatment through another reimbursement system designed for reimbursing hospitals, physicians, skilled nursing facilities and other care providers.

Unfortunately, a problem at any of these stages can seriously delay a product from reaching Medicare patients.

For example, Mr. Speaker:

Exogen, Inc., a small company that developed an ultrasound device for healing bone fractures, has encountered 4 years of delays in getting Medicare coverage. Oddly enough, the product is currently being reimbursed by more than 800 private insurers and health plans, but not by Medicare.

The Cordis Corporation, a division of Johnson & Johnson, encountered significant problems in obtaining appropriate Medicare coding and payment for coronary stents, which are stainless steel tubes used to treat narrowing of the coronary arteries. The company faced challenges in obtaining a unique code for the stent procedure from HCFA, and once the new code was assigned, Medicare took several more years to place the device in the ap-

propriate payment category. Sadly, the reason for the delay was Medicare's database was only a partial data set and HCFA's precedent did not allow it to use sample data in determining the hospital costs of providing the stent.

A manufacturer of a cochlear ear implant halted active marketing of one model and stopped research on another because of inadequate Medicare reimbursements. According to an article that appeared in *The New England Journal of Medicine* at the time, payment for the device remained well below its average cost, causing hospitals to “ration the availability of the device to Medicare patients because of the financial losses involved. Eventually, so few patients received the implant that the manufacturer discontinued its production.” (Nancy M. Kane, D.B.A., and Paul D. Manoukian, M.D., M.P.H., “The Effect of the Medicare Prospective Payment System on the Adoption of New Technology,” *The New England Journal of Medicine*, November 16, 1989, pp. 1378-1382.)

The most distressing problem in all of these cases, as in many others just like them, is that Medicare patients are being denied access to beneficial therapies.

I am pleased that HCFA is attempting to address the problems associated with its process for making national coverage decisions for new technologies. However, unless the shortcomings in the coding and payment systems are corrected, HCFA will not fully achieve its ultimate goal of improving Medicare's health care delivery system.

Several distinct issues need to be addressed:

Medicare's system for creating and assigning procedure codes to medical technologies is cumbersome and slow.

Medicare's methods of updating Medicare payment levels and payment groups to accommodate changes in medical technology increase the risk that Medicare will lag behind new advances in medical technology.

Medicare's refusal to use data that are developed outside of the Medicare program blinds the program to useful insights about the costs, charges and outcomes of medical technologies.

To address these issues, “The Patient Access to Medical Technology Act of 1999” would:

1. Adjust Medicare payment levels and payment categories at least annually to reflect changes in medical practice and technology.

2. Use valid external sources of information to update payment categories if Medicare's data are limited or not yet available. More specifically, the bill directs HCFA to use a valid, statistically representative sample and also to draw on external sources of data when its own dataset is inadequate. It directs HCFA to consider statistically representative data from such sources as private insurers, manufacturers, suppliers and other non-Medicare entities.

3. Update national procedure codes (HCPCs Level II) more frequently to reduce delays and timelags. Without an accurate identifying code, technologies and procedures cannot be reimbursed appropriately by Medicare. It can take HCFA up to 18 months to approve a new code because of the way the agency structures its calendar for making such changes. This bill would make the process more efficient by eliminating the single annual deadline for applications and permitting such

requests to be accepted on a rolling, quarterly basis.

4. Continue to use local procedure codes to ensure availability of the most recent advances in medical technology. Most coverage decisions are made at the local level by local contractors, which use the "HCPCS Level III Codes" to describe new technologies that have not yet been incorporated into the national coding process. HCFA has proposed eliminating these useful codes, but this bill would require HCFA to maintain this effective local system.

5. Establish an advisory committee on Medicare coding and payment to ensure that HCFA's coding and payment systems are open, prompt and functioning properly. This panel would complement HCFA's newly formed Medicare Coverage Advisory Committee.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will correct a number of complex but significant problems that currently plague HCFA's coverage, coding and payment systems. Most importantly, it will help ensure that Medicare beneficiaries have timely access to life-enhancing and life-saving medical advances.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT ANDERSON,  
PRESIDENT OF THE SAN MATEO  
COUNTY CENTRAL LABOR COUN-  
CIL

### HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 7, 1999*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to Mr. Robert Anderson, who is retiring after two distinguished decades as President of the San Mateo County Central Labor Council. During his remarkable tenure as San Mateo's top advocate for working people, innumerable working men and women have benefited enormously from Mr. Anderson's dedication to improving working and living conditions for families in San Mateo County and for employees of the airline industry nationwide.

Bob Anderson, a member of International Association of Machinists, Local Lodge 1781, is a former United Airlines Mechanic, and currently he serves as ground safety coordinator for IAM District 141. His outstanding career as a labor advocate includes his efforts to establish, build and chair the San Francisco Airport Labor Coalition and its predecessor, the Airport Health and Safety Coalition. He has served on the advisory boards of the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Labor Occupational Health Program at the University of California, Berkeley.

Mr. Speaker, the labor movement's involvement and effectiveness in our community has been greatly strengthened through Bob Anderson's dedication and service on the Central Labor Council's Committee on Political Action, which supports local, state and national officeholders who share labor's progressive social values. He worked tirelessly against the passage of Proposition 226, the anti-working family initiative which was rightly rejected by California voters in June of 1998.

Bob Anderson's most memorable achievement is the establishment of PALCARE, San Mateo County's community based, flexibly scheduled childcare center which opened in 1993. For twelve years Bob was undeterred in his determination to establish this affordable, high-quality, around-the-clock childcare for working parents at San Francisco International Airport and other work sites where employees must work non-traditional hours. Mr. Anderson leaves an enduring legacy through his establishment of this safe, happy haven for the children of those who contribute to San Mateo's thriving economy.

Mr. Speaker, Bob Anderson will be honored at the 20th Annual Banquet of the Committee on Political Education on Saturday, June 12, 1999. I join with those who commend his lifelong, selfless quest to better the lives of his fellow working men and women, and I extend my most enthusiastic wishes for a blissful and happy retirement as he embarks on this new chapter in his life.

AKRON, OHIO, AREA SKI RESORT  
WINS ENERGY CONSERVATION  
AWARD

### HON. TOM SAWYER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 7, 1999*

Mr. SAWYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the Boston Mills/Brandywine Resort, located in my congressional district, just north of Akron, Ohio. The Boston Mills/Brandywine Resort is being honored this week for excellence in energy conservation.

This is remarkable for two reasons, one obvious and one not so obvious. First, Ohio is not the location many would imagine when thinking of award-winning ski areas. But to my colleagues from the higher elevation, I highly recommend Ohio to you. It is actually possible, in Ohio's 14th District, to work all day in downtown Akron and ski in the evening. Moreover, the twin resorts at Boston Mills and Brandywine are located within the boundaries of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, and are one of its important amenities.

But it is surprising that Boston Mills was singled out because of its size. Being a small ski area makes it hard to compete against larger operations like Vail and Aspen. But Boston Mills won the energy conservation award over both of these sites.

Boston Mills found that its energy needs were causing problems for its neighbors. Neighbors actually found their lights got dim when snowmaking equipment was turned on full force. Responding to these and other energy related problems, Boston Mills developed an ambitious \$1.5 million system providing maximum power efficiency and snow production. Making snow now costs 69.5 percent less. They also located new grooming machines which use 33 percent less fuel. Boston Mills calculates total energy savings at 962,000 kilowatt hours of electricity and 9,404 gallons of gas.

Boston Mills/Brandywine Resort will receive the Golden Eagle Award from the Times Mirror Co. this week, one of only five awards being made this year. I hope their conservation initiative will be an example to private recreation providers across our land.

SALUTE TO THE TONY MODICA  
PIZZA DANCE FOUNDATION AND  
ONE WORLD-ONE HEART, INC.

### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 7, 1999*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the contributions of the Tony Modica Pizza Dance Foundation and One World-One Heart, Inc., organizations which exemplifies our nation's direction of unity and cultural exchange through inter-generational activities and programs.

Tony Modica came to this country as an immigrant and became successful in the pizza industry. This Foundation is a means for him to give back to the community through a program that benefits the elderly and the youth. Pizza is a favorite food of both young and old and its incorporation into a program which features song, dance and pizza makes for an enjoyable experience for all involved. Modica uses the pizza as an international symbol of unity. The Foundation has created programs that promote unity; and encourages children to stay in school and improve their grades. After his lectures, the students and seniors are treated to pizza and a lesson in the Foundations' original Pizza Dance—a step choreographed to mimic the art of pizza making. The Pizza is used as a symbol because of its varied toppings and delectable enjoyment that is recognized by all cultures and ethnic groups. The positive messages are enhanced through dance and the enjoyable feast and taste of pizza!

One World-One Heart, Inc. serves to provide access to educational; recreational; cultural and intergenerational programs for participants from all ethnic, religious, economic and cultural backgrounds. The founders, Catherine Laporte and Steven Kaplansky have over 30 years of experience of providing non-profit; social and recreational services to communities at large.

One World-One Heart, Inc. has joined with The Tony Modica Pizza Dance Foundation to promote unity and cultural appreciation through free public activities and have mobilized others to support a unified message of respect and appreciation of all people. The combined efforts are a great model of how government, not-for-profits; religious and private sectors can work together for the good of the public.

Pizza is undoubtedly the world's most popular food. The positive messages are enhanced through song, dance and an enjoyable feast of Pizza. The Mayor and City Council have recognized the organization's efforts in New York. By taking this program to a national level with its fun spirited message. The Tony Modica Pizza Dance Foundation and One World-One Heart, Inc., are positive examples of how private citizens and not-for-profit organizations can make a difference in the community with the support of business and government.

I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in recognizing the "Pizza"; "The Tony Modica Pizza Dance Foundation; and One World-One Heart, Inc." and in proclaiming June National "Taste of Pizza" Month.