

class facility, which is the largest public works project ever undertaken by the city of Minneapolis. She currently serves on the implementation team for a Convention Center expansion project and remains a valued resource for other development projects in the city.

Since Alice W. Rainville carved out her niche in Minneapolis politics in the 1970's, more and more women have entered politics and government service in Minneapolis. Today, including Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton, a majority of the Minneapolis City Council members are women. By proving to other women that they, too, can achieve success in what had once been a male-dominated political world, Alice W. Rainville is a true pioneer.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to honor Alice W. Rainville in celebration of Women's History Month. I thank her for her contributions to the city of Minneapolis, and I wish her continued successes in the future.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO SAVE MEDICARE LIVES AND MONEY

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 13, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the first in a series of bills to modernize Medicare for the future: the "Centers of Excellence Act of 1999." Not only will this legislation save Medicare money, it will save the lives of many of its beneficiaries.

Centers of Excellence has already been proven to decrease mortality and lower cost.

Centers of Excellence originated as a demonstration project in the early 1990's to evaluate the effect of volume on quality and mortality for coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery. The Department of Health and Human Services selected facilities on the basis of their outstanding experience, outcomes, and efficiency in performing these procedures. They found that hospitals that do large volumes of a certain type of procedure tend to have better outcomes and quality. The demonstration resulted in an 8 percent average annual decline in mortality and saved Medicare an average of 14 percent on CABG procedures. This year, CBO has scored the Centers of Excellence proposal as saving \$300 million over five years and \$600 million over ten years.

Since the early 1990's, numerous reports have come out documenting higher quality care and lower mortality in facilities that perform a large volume of cancer treatments, cardiac surgeries, and transplants, among others. These conditions often require highly specialized care that should only be provided by the highest-rated facilities.

Centers of Excellence is currently being used in the private sector to improve quality and decrease cost.

Many private sector employers are requiring higher quality standards from their health plans. Not only are these employer groups able to improve quality through Centers of Excellence, they are also able to negotiate deeper discounts with high-volume facilities. Medicare should be given the authority to contract with certain hospitals for quality and volume—

both to save money and to deliver better health care.

Centers of Excellence has already been approved by the House in the past.

The bill we are introducing passed the House in the 1997 Budget Reconciliation bill (H.R. 1015). H.R. 1015 would have made the Centers of Excellence program a permanent part of Medicare by authorizing the Secretary to pay selected facilities a single rate for all services, potentially including post-acute services associated with a surgical procedure or hospital admission related to a medical condition. As with the CABG demonstration, selected facilities would have to meet special quality standards and would be required to implement a quality improvement plan.

The amendment was dropped in conference because of resistance from the Senate. Some Senators from States where no hospitals were designated as Centers of Excellence felt that the program tended to cast into doubt the quality or excellence of non-designated hospitals. Mr. Speaker, the name of this program is not important—what is important is that it can save money and by encouraging beneficiaries to use hospitals that have high volume, quality outcomes, it can save lives.

Like Lake Wobegon, where all the children are above average, it is human nature for all Members of Congress to want their local hospitals to be above average. But not all hospitals are above average—and this is a serious matter. In fact, it is a matter of life and death.

Indeed, good health policy in this nation would prohibit hospitals from doing sophisticated procedures if they do not have sufficient experience. This principle is applied to liver transplants, for example, and ought to be applied to other complex procedures as well. We may all have pride in our local hospitals, but the fact is: some of them are killing people because they do not do enough of certain types of procedures and therefore are not skilled in those procedures.

I regret that this important provision has been subjected to pork-barreling by previous Congresses. I hope that this body will see that it is included in the next Medicare bill that moves through Congress.

Some members of the now defunct Medicare Commission are proposing radical and unnecessary changes to Medicare. Before we cut back benefits and ask beneficiaries to pay more, we should explore every possible cost saving in the system. This bill is a step in the right direction: it saves money and improves the quality of care provided to seniors and the disabled.

The 1999 Trustees report projects that the Part A trust fund will remain viable until 2015, one of the longest periods of solvency ever projected in the history of the program. Simple changes, such as the Centers of Excellence proposal, are all that are needed to improve Medicare for its beneficiaries.

As further explanation of why this legislation makes great sense, I am including below "Extracts from the November, 1995 Research Report" on the Centers of Excellence Demonstration.

CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE DEMONSTRATION EXTRACTS FROM NOVEMBER 1995 RESEARCH REPORT

Rationale for the Demonstration: Physicians operate under different payment incentives than hospitals, so hospital managers have difficulties implementing more efficient practice

patterns. A global fee that includes physician services aligns incentives and encourages physicians to use institutional resources in a more cost effective manner.

Design of the Demonstration: Under the demonstration, Medicare paid each of the hospitals a single global rate for each discharge in DRGs 106 and 107, bypass with and without catheterization. This rate included all inpatient and physician services. The standard Medicare hospital pass-throughs were also included, i.e., capital and direct medical education, on a prorated basis. Any related readmissions were also included in the rate. Pre- and post-discharge physician services were excluded except for the standard inclusions in the surgeon's global fee. All four hospitals agreed to forego any outlier payments for particularly expensive cases. The hospitals and physicians were free to divide up the payment any way they chose.

Medicare Savings under the Demonstration: From the start of the demonstration in May 1991 through December 1993, the Medicare program saved \$15.3 million on bypass patients treated in the four original demonstration hospitals. The average discount amounted to roughly 14 percent on the \$111 million in expected spending on bypass patients, including a 90-day post-discharge period.

Ninety percent of the savings came from HCFA-negotiated discounts on the Part A and B inpatient expected payments.

Eight percent came from lower-than-expected spending on post-discharge care.

Beneficiary Savings under the Demonstration: Beneficiaries (and their insurers) saved another \$2.3 million in Part B coinsurance payments.

Total Savings under the Demonstration: Total Medicare savings estimated to have been \$17.6 million in the 2.5 year period.

TRIBUTE TO NOU KA YANG

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 13, 1999

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit for the RECORD this article from the March 21, 1999 edition of the St. Paul Pioneer Press. This article tells the extraordinary story of a St. Paul teenager who has been rewarded for her perseverance and dedication to her community.

Ms. Nou Ka Yang received the honor of being named The Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year for the state of Minnesota. Ms. Yang has triumphed over the devastating circumstances of losing her father at the age of eight after spending time in a Laos Hmong refugee camp. She is currently a high school senior at Como Park High School where she is an honor student. She has maintained a 3.5 GPA and continues to support her community by doing activities such as translating for other Hmong residents who do not speak English.

The Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year Award is a high honor that recently received the support of renowned talk show host Oprah Winfrey. The winners are chosen based on their leadership qualities, academic success, and ability to overcome obstacles. These are all qualities that Ms. Yang and the other candidates exhibit. Having youth in our communities with such promise allows me to feel comfortable about the future of our country.

Each state finalist receives a \$25,000 scholarship and proceeds to the regional level where they compete for additional scholarship monies. I wish Ms. Yang luck as she proceeds to the next level. I know that she will represent the Fourth District and the State of Minnesota well.

[From the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, Mar. 21, 1999]

ST. PAUL TEEN-AGER AWARDED \$25,000 OPRAH SCHOLARSHIP
(By Nancy Ngo)

A St. Paul high school senior has won the Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year award, good for a \$25,000 Oprah Winfrey Scholarship for college education.

Nou Ka Yang, 18, a senior at Como Park High School, took top honors in the annual state competition that started in 1947. Until the nonprofit service club joined forces with the television celebrity last year, however, no cash prize was given.

Yang was chosen Saturday after interviews with judges at the Radisson Hotel St. Paul. She competed against three candidates from the Minneapolis, Duluth and St. Cloud youth clubs.

The Oprah scholarships were established by the entertainer to help children who otherwise might not be able to afford college. The Boys and Girls Club, which emphasizes working with underprivileged youth, was chosen by Winfrey because of its national work, said Marie Grimm, communications director of the St. Paul Boys and Girls Club.

Winners from all 50 states receive a \$25,000 scholarship. Yang now advances to the regional competition with prospects of winning an additional \$8,000.

Yang plans to attend the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, an option she doubts would have been possible had she not won. She wants to be a computer animator.

She was chosen for her leadership qualities, academic success and abilities to overcome obstacles. Yang, a Laotian Hmong refugee, arrived in the United States from a refugee camp in Thailand when she was 8 years old. She said her father was killed after returning to Laos from the refugee camp.

Yang has four brothers and two sisters. She said she often is busy helping her mother with household chores, as well as taking care of her younger siblings.

Her demanding home life has not prevented her from becoming an excellent student. She ended her junior year with a grade point average of 3.5 Yang has been a member of the Boys and Girls Club for five years and is active at the organization's Mt. Airy public-housing complex location in St. Paul.

"She's an extremely hard worker," said George Latimer, former St. Paul mayor, who was one of the judges. He said he was impressed with Yang's ability to balance home and school tasks. Yang also contributes to her community in activities such as translating for Hmong residents who do not speak English, he added.

Yang sings in a church choir and is on the St. Paul Housing Authority's teen council, among other activities.

The other candidates for the youth award were Charles Adams, a senior at North High School in Minneapolis; Trena Ackerman, a sophomore at Deerfield High School in Duluth; and Tiffany Cherne, a sophomore at Apollo High School in St. Cloud.

The Boys and Girls Club is a nonprofit organization for children ages 6 to 10. There are six Boys and Girls Clubs in Minnesota: St. Paul, Minneapolis, Duluth, St. Cloud, Mille Lacs and Detroit Lakes. The clubs have drug-and-alcohol prevention programs, sports and social activities and offer career-education information.

A TRIBUTE TO STEVE ARVESCHOU

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 13, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Steve Arveschoug, the General Manager of the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District. Mr. Arveschoug has demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to his work on behalf of the district's many water users. He has emerged as a national leader on the complex and frustrating issue of Bureau of Reclamation oversight. Mr. Arveschoug's tireless efforts have led to a Congressional initiative to examine Bureau of Reclamation practices. Moreover, his keen eye for detail and persistence in negotiations has undoubtedly saved water users and the taxpayers a significant amount of hard-earned dollars. I commend Steve Arveschoug for his solid efforts, and I look forward to working with him in the future.

HONORING DR. MARY CEDERBERG

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 13, 1999

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues an extraordinary doctor and friend who was recently honored for twenty-five years of outstanding service in Santa Barbara County—Dr. Mary Cederberg.

A graduate of the University of Missouri, Mary received her M.D. from the University of Louisville, Kentucky. She then completed a Fellowship at Boston Children's Hospital and worked briefly at Harvard University. Since 1956, Mary has worked tirelessly as a pediatrician and an advocate for children.

During Mary's twenty-five years of service with the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department, she has directed the California Children's Services program as well as the Children's Health and Disease Prevention (C.H.D.P.) program. It is through the C.H.D.P. program that Mary has left her mark on the entire county of Santa Barbara, by providing innovative and comprehensive preventive care to thousands of children.

Mary is a dedicated, hardworking, hands-on doctor, who does whatever it takes to help the children and families she serves. It has been an honor to have worked with her for so many years. Dr. Mary Cederberg is a role-model for our nation and her service exemplifies how we want public health care to work. I will continue to look to Mary's vision and leadership as our nation addresses health care for children.

Mr. Speaker, today I celebrate Dr. Mary Cederberg's career and I commend her for years of service to the County of Santa Barbara and to our nation.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH HONOREES

HON. MARTIN OLAV SABO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 13, 1999

Mr. SABO. Mr. Speaker, as Women's History Month draws to a close today, I rise to salute a woman from my Congressional District in Minnesota whose long commitment to community service has proven her to be a true leader.

Betty Benjamin has been a lifelong proponent of women's reproductive rights, playing an active role in the pro-choice movement for 31 years. A former teacher and social worker, Benjamin helped organize the Abortion Rights Council of Minnesota in 1966, in light of her concern that existing law prohibited a woman's right to choose and caused many women with unwanted pregnancies to seek illegal, dangerous abortions. Through her leadership in the ARC—today known as the Minnesota National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL)—Benjamin and the other unpaid volunteers worked countless hours in their effort to ensure that women have legal access to abortion. Their educating, lobbying, and fund-raising efforts were rewarded in 1973 when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* to legalize abortion.

But Benjamin's work did not end there. She has remained active in the pro-choice movement because of her concerns that the *Roe v. Wade* decision could be eroded. She led the Abortion Rights Council in Minnesota as president for 14 years, and has served as a board member of the National Abortion Rights Action League since 1967. She represents Minnesota NARAL as incoming chairperson of the Women Candidate Development Coalition, which recruits women across the state to serve in public office. She currently is a member of the National Organization for Women (NOW), at both the state and national levels. Recently, Minnesota NARAL established the Betty Benjamin Leadership Development Fund to help identify, educate and train interested Minnesota college students for future leadership roles.

Benjamin's tireless efforts and many accomplishments on behalf of women's right to choose may best be explained in her own words: "My concern is that the full range of safe reproductive choices will be accessible to all our daughters and granddaughters. To make that a reality there is much each person can do." Betty Benjamin's life is a testament to her words.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to honor Betty Benjamin in celebration of Women's History Month. I thank her for her contributions to both the state of Minnesota and to our country, and I wish her continued successes in the future.

SUPPORT PASSAGE OF H.R. 912, THE MEDICAL USE OF MARI- JUANA ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 13, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 912, The Medical Use