

Coverage Act—legislation that will ensure the accessibility and coverage of medical second opinions.

Imagine that your doctor tells you that you must undergo radical surgery that may threaten the use of a limb or leave you with a serious chronic condition. Understandably, you would request a second opinion from another physician. Most health care groups see the value in such requests and provide patients with a second opinion. Besides giving patients much needed peace of mind, second opinions can benefit health plans by reducing the number of invasive procedures and result in better patient care through increased dialogue about treatment options.

However, when I was a member of the California State Assembly, I heard from a number of patients who experienced a glitch in their health care coverage. They noticed the absence of a clear process for obtaining medical second opinions. These patients, many struggling with challenging health conditions, had difficulties obtaining second opinions through their health plans.

After meeting with patients, physicians and health groups, I authored a law in California that guarantees coverage of second opinions. Patients, meeting any one of several qualifying conditions, are entitled to a timely second opinion by a “qualified health care professional,” within 72 hours in cases of serious or imminent health threat. When another expert is not available within the provider group or network, the organization will pay for an appropriately qualified doctor outside of the plan. Patients are responsible for the costs of applicable co-payments.

The law in California was a good first step. Unfortunately, this legislation does not cover the more than 4 million Californians enrolled in self-insured, federally regulated health plans. Nationwide, this translates into almost 51 million persons without guaranteed access to second opinions. This means that one in four insured families are not protected by California’s own second opinion law! I believe the time has come to make access to second opinions a national standard.

I urge you, Mr. Speaker, and all of my colleagues to pass this critical legislation into law.

ON THE OCCASION OF FATHER’S DAY: A SALUTE TO RALPH R. SALIMPOUR, MD, DCH, FAAP

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 16, 2005

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, “Blessed indeed is the man who hears gentle voices call him father!” The name Ralph Salimpour has become synonymous with charity and commitment in the greater Los Angeles area. Indeed, Ralph Salimpour is blessed for selflessly giving him energy and his love, and dedicating his left to those most in need.

Dr. Ralph R. Salimpour is the senior attending physician of the highly acclaimed Salimpour Pediatric Medical Group in Los Angeles. Dr. Salimpour is internationally recognized as a global expert in the fields of Tetanus, Malnutrition, and Rickets and has the largest published series on Tetanus and Rickets in the world.

Dr. Salimpour graduated from medical school at the age of 23 and has practiced medicine on 3 continents over the span of nearly 5 decades. He attended the Shiraz School of Medicine in Iran, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of England, and Cedars-Sinai Medical Center—UCLA School of Medicine.

In Iran, Dr. Salimpour emerged as the Director of the Research Institute of Child Health where he described, for the first time, Rickets and its etiology in tropical countries. This pioneering research eventually helped to change the American Academy of Pediatrics’ recommendations for Vitamin D Supplementation in breastfed babies, staving off the debilitating disease in America. His research and his leadership in the treatment of Tetanus cut the mortality rate of this horrific disease from a devastating 100 percent to half of that value, directly resulting in countless saved lives. Dr. Salimpour also tackled the issue of malnutrition in Iran, demonstrating that it resulted from poor education rather than poverty. Dr. Salimpour’s scientific and clinical research propelled him to the world’s medical center stage, gaining international acclaim for his pioneering research.

After the 1979 Iranian revolution, Dr. Salimpour and his family moved to the United States where Dr. Salimpour, a man nearly in the 6th decade of his life, sat for and successfully passed the rigorous series of exams enabling him to once again practice medicine, this time in America. He has been awarded the prestigious Governor’s Commendation from the State of California and the Award of Excellence from California’s Vaccine for Children Program. Today, Dr. Salimpour serves as Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the UCLA School of Medicine and is a practicing pediatrician in Los Angeles.

Dr. Salimpour is also a founding Board Member of the NexCare Collaborative, which created a state-of-the-art, highly-innovative and successful call center/web site and communications program aimed at families with young children. This program has assisted more than 100,000 families and helped enroll more than 18,000 children into free or low cost health insurance programs.

Married to his wife Farah for 44 years, the 2 have raised 4 children, Pejman, Sherry, Pedram, and Nilou. Dr. and Mrs. Salimpour also have 6 grandchildren, Koby, Alexa, Branden, Gabriella, Allen, and Ariella. Dr. and Mrs. Salimpour have inspired a love of medicine and children amongst their sons. Doctors Pejman and Pedram Salimpour are practicing pediatricians and leaders in their field.

Mother Teresa once said, “I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy. I woke and I saw that life is all service. I served and I saw that service is joy.” Dr. Salimpour has improved the human condition by way of perseverance and leadership. He has passed on these ideals to his students as a professor of pediatrics, to his tens of thousands of patients, and to his children and grandchildren. As we approach Father’s Day, I salute Dr. Salimpour for his blessings as a “father” to many.

IN RECOGNITION AND REMEMBRANCE OF THE LIFE OF U.S. MARINE CORPS CAPTAIN KELLY C. HINZ

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 17, 2005

Mrs. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to recognize and honor the life U.S./Marine Corps Capt. Kelly C. Hinz.

Capt. Hinz was a Marine Corps fighter pilot who died May 2, 2005, from injuries received when the F/A-18 Hornet aircraft he was piloting crashed in Iraq while flying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Capt. Hinz was a native of Woodbury, Minn., and a 1993 graduate of St. Thomas Academy in Mendota Heights, Minn., where he was a member of the State championship downhill ski team, and where his family remained active after their sons had graduated. Capt. Hinz was also a graduate of the University of St. Thomas, in St. Paul, Minn., in the District I represent.

Capt. Hinz earned his wings as an aviator in March 2002, after which he and his wife Molly were stationed in San Diego. Capt. Hinz and his wife have one daughter, Abby.

Capt. Hinz comes from a military, and flying, family. Donald Hinz was a retired naval and commercial pilot who died in a plane crash in 2004. In his retirement, Donald Hinz had committed himself to restoring a P-51 C Mustang fighter plane in honor of the Tuskegee Airmen. His brother, Ben Hinz, is also a Marine pilot. His brother Kurt has his private pilot’s license, and brother Luke will earn his this summer.

Capt. Hinz inherited a strong sense of duty to his country from his father, and reminds us of the human face of Operation Iraqi Freedom. There have been 19 members of the military from Minnesota who have died in Iraq since 2003. I honor Capt. Hinz for his courageous service to this country, and his commitment to protecting our freedom.

CONGRATULATING HORACE L. DICKERSON, JR. ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 17, 2005

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Horace L. Dickerson, Jr. for his service to the Social Security Administration and to congratulate him on his upcoming retirement. Mr. Dickerson began his career at SSA in 1971 and held several field office positions before moving to Social Security’s headquarters as a Division Director, and later Director of Disability Operations.

After a stint as the Director of Social Security’s Central Records Operations, Mr. Dickerson was promoted to Regional Commissioner for the Dallas Region in 1997. In that role he has ably overseen more than 4,000 employees in 151 field offices and has been responsible for SSA Teleservice Centers in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and part of Arizona.