

American Hospital Association, a distinction given to the rural hospital administrator across the Nation who "displayed outstanding leadership commitment to meet the challenges faced by small/rural hospitals."

Donald was chosen to be the administrator by the first board of directors for the Citizens Memorial Hospital in Bolivar, MO, in the early 1980's. With his experience in hospital administration and construction, Donald has taken what was once just a dream to new heights of reality. In the last 17 years he has built a huge rural facility as executive director of the Citizens Memorial Health Care Foundation. This facility provides excellent health care to more than 75,000 individuals in Bolivar and the surrounding areas. The Citizens Memorial Health Care Foundation now consists of an acute care hospital, three long-term care facilities, a residential care facility, independent living apartments, 12 physician clinics, including six certified rural health clinics—the first certified in Missouri—home health, hospice, home medical equipment, homemaker services, a wellness and counseling center, a statewide health maintenance organization, and an extensive outpatient rehabilitation program. Donald also always makes time for his staff, patients, residents, and community members. He meets individually with each new employee and makes regular rounds of all of his health care facilities in the area.

It is a privilege to honor Citizens Memorial Hospital Administrator, Donald J. Babb, on this well deserved award. I know the hospital will continue to improve and grow for years to come. The State of Missouri is lucky to have such a facility and I want to express my sincere appreciation to Donald Babb, who makes Citizens Memorial Hospital excel.●

SERGEANT ALVIN C. YORK

● Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today is an historic day for it was 79 years ago on this date, October 8, 1918, that Sgt. Alvin C. York faced a battery of German soldiers alone in the Battle of the Argonne. Sergeant York's bravery during World War I captured the imagination of the world. Here at home, he was heralded as a true hero, complete with the largest ticker tape parade New York City had ever seen. President Wilson and General Pershing offered their personal thanks, and Sergeant York received this Nation's Medal of Honor.

But home for Alvin York, despite his new found fame, was the hills of Tennessee in Fentress County. The values instilled in him by his family remained with him throughout his life, and he used his platform as a hero of the Tennessee hills to better the lives of his neighbors and friends. Sergeant York founded an industrial and agricultural school in Fentress County, built a church and Bible school, and when money ran short, he helped to pay the teachers' salaries himself.

Today, 79 years later, we salute the memory of Alvin C. York and his heroic deeds as a young soldier far from home on the battlefield in France. Despite his great fame, home and family were far more important to him. His heroism extends far beyond the battlefield. For the values that he lived each and every day as a citizen of Fentress County, TN, are values for all of us to emulate in our daily lives.

Mr. President, the Sergeant York Historical Association, of which I am proud to serve on the board of directors, is committed to keeping the memory of Sergeant York alive. I commend the association for its efforts to ensure that the York homeplace, his grist mill, his papers, and the history of World War I are not forgotten, but will live on for generations to visit, enjoy, and appreciate a piece of our Nation's fabric.

Sergeant York was a World War I hero, but in truth, he is a hero for all time.●

MEDICARE BENEFICIARY FREEDOM TO CONTRACT ACT

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Medicare Beneficiary Freedom to Contract Act of 1997. This legislation protects the right of the elderly to be treated by the physician of their choice.

Great reform of Medicare was achieved during the 1997 Balanced Budget Act: regulations were streamlined, greater flexibility was given to rural health care, and, most important, the Medicare trust fund—on the verge of bankruptcy—was salvaged for an additional 10 years.

However, due to the administration's threat to veto the entire Balanced Budget act, the conference committee to the act added a requirement clearly infringing on the rights of senior citizens. The President's provision prohibits providers who privately contract from treating Medicare patients for a period of 2 years. Therefore, upon enactment of the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, it is now unlawful for a doctor to take a private payment from a Medicare-eligible patient if during the previous 2 years he has billed Medicare for any service rendered to a patient over the age of 65.

What is the reality of the President's provision?

The reality is that it will be almost impossible for a senior citizen to contract privately for medical services because few or no physicians are going to be able to make ends meet if they can't accept Medicare patients for 2 years. The reality is that, unlike every other insured American, senior citizens have no option but to receive the services that their insurance carrier, Medicare, recognizes and is willing to pay for. In essence, upon turning the age of 65, you have now lost a significant right—a right of choice in who provides your health care.

Mr. President, even in the socialized medical system of Great Britain,

choice is offered to the elderly. In Great Britain, a senior citizen has the choice to pay privately for his or her medical services. Don't the elderly of America deserve that same choice?

To remedy this situation, I have sponsored legislation introduced by Senator KYL of Arizona and Senator NICKLES of Oklahoma. This legislation explicitly provides that any Medicare beneficiary can enter into an agreement with the physician or practitioner of their choice for any health care service and for any length of time when they choose to pay for such services out of their own pocket. In brief, the bill will ensure that Medicare-eligible beneficiaries who choose to pay out of pocket will have an unrestricted right to the health care provider of their choice. I cosponsored a similar bill two years ago.

The American Medical Association has strongly endorsed this legislation. In a letter dated September 18, 1997, the AMA executive vice-president writes:

The AMA believes that it is essential that Medicare-eligible seniors have the unfettered right to spend their own money to buy health care if and as they so choose, irrespective of coverage under the Medicare program. * * * (this) bill is an urgently needed clarification of the law and would greatly further the goal of providing Medicare beneficiaries with more choices in their pursuit of health care.

I ask my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation.●

CHANGES TO THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE ALLOCATION

● Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, section 203 of House Concurrent Resolution 84, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for fiscal year 1998, allows the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee to adjust the allocation for the Appropriations Committee to reflect new budget authority and outlays provided for the renewal of expiring contracts for tenant- and project-based housing assistance under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

I hereby submit revisions to the 1998 Senate Appropriations Committee budget authority and outlay allocations, pursuant to section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act.

The revisions follow:

	Budget authority	Outlays
Current allocation:		
Defense discretionary	269,000,000,000	266,823,000,000
Nondefense discretionary ..	256,036,000,000	283,243,000,000
Violent crime reduction fund	5,500,000,000	3,592,000,000
Mandatory	277,312,000,000	278,725,000,000
Total allocation	807,721,000,000	832,262,000,000
Adjustments:		
Defense discretionary
Nondefense discretionary ..	- 486,000,000
Violent crime reduction fund
Mandatory
Total allocation	- 486,000,000
Revised allocation:		
Defense discretionary	269,000,000,000	266,823,000,000
Nondefense discretionary ..	255,550,000,000	283,243,000,000
Violent crime reduction fund	5,500,000,000	3,592,000,000
Mandatory	277,312,000,000	278,725,000,000
Total allocation	807,362,000,000	832,383,000,000