

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.