

be able to acknowledge progress while recognizing that government does do some things right.

Let's work together to make government work better for all Americans.

I appreciate your time and attention, and would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

NATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRUCCI). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to acknowledge the kickoff of National Men's Health Week as we lead up to the celebration of Father's Day on June 17, 2001.

The importance of this special week is to raise national awareness among men relative to issues affecting our well-being. As men, Mr. Speaker, we play many roles in society, such as husbands, fathers, brothers, bread winners, Congressmen, Presidents, and more importantly co-partners in families and in some instances heads of families. None of the roles mentioned above are mutually exclusive. Rather, they are all part of an integrated whole.

Some of us are very comfortable in each role. Others may find it difficult handling the presence and pressures associated with so many roles. Therefore, as we deal with National Men's Health Week, which is designed to promote health among men and to address a broad range of issues regardless of roles or status, let us be mindful that this is not an egotistical approach to elicit gender competition, but it is simply a reminder that we should all pay attention to problems that are gender specific.

If we are not healthy, we cannot be the best husbands, fathers, or productive citizens that are vital to help keep our society going. Today, men suffer from some alarming health statistics. It is common knowledge that heart disease is the leading cause of death among men in the United States.

The life expectancy of men is much lower than that of women by at least 7 years. Currently men represent 84 percent of all AIDS cases in the United States. In the African-American community, HIV/AIDS is spreading like wildfire. A recent survey revealed an increased infection rate of 4.4 percent for young gay men. The rates ranged from 2.5 percent all the way up to 14.7 percent among gay black men. In Chicago alone, gay men account for 53 percent of HIV/AIDS cases. Public health officials say that they are seeing disturbing trends of reckless behavior.

Another sad statistic is the mortality rate for African Americans from all types of cancer. It is 68 percent higher than for any other group. There are many other types of ailments that afflict us, such as high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, excessive accidents on the road.

Well, as one can see very well, the problems are there. The odds seem to

be against men. But I assure my colleagues that an ounce of prevention is worth much more than 1,000 remedies.

So I would urge all men not to wait until it is too late to bring into our lives the proper balance of health care. We can all have a better life. If that is not possible, we can all certainly make life more bearable.

I urge all men to take time to reflect on the value of your life, on the well-being of yourself, and the ripple effect that it can have on all of the roles that you play and the lives of all the people with whom you come into contact. Should your health, your state of mind, your stress level or anything else be of concern that requires attention, please consult your physician, seek assistance at your earliest convenience.

Let us celebrate Father's Day in good health as we celebrate this week dedicated to improving the health, not only of all of our citizens, but especially the health of men who oftentimes do not look or pay as much attention to themselves.

I also take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to indicate support for the efforts and activities of individuals, organizations, institutions and other entities that are designed to honor fatherhood on Father's Day, especially when we look at statistics which suggest that children who are raised without their fathers account for 63 percent of youth suicides, 71 percent of pregnant teenagers, 90 percent of homeless and runaway children, 85 percent of behavior disorders.

As my colleagues can see, Mr. Speaker, all of these problems are seriously affecting not only the lives of individuals, but the lives of people in our country.

HEALTH CARE AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues, we wish to discuss the whole issue of health care this evening. Particularly we are going to be discussing the issue of prescription drugs.

We anticipate that, over the next few years, prescription drug use will increase with age along with the prevalence of chronic and acute health problems. Over 13 million Medicare beneficiaries have no drug coverage whatsoever, and over three in five beneficiaries have undependable drug coverage.

The Federal Health Insurance Program that covers 40 million elderly and disabled Americans does not cover outpatient prescription drugs. Ten million Medicare beneficiaries have no drug coverage at all.

According to HCFA, the national spending on drugs has tripled in the

last decade, and it is expected to more than double between 2000 and 2010 from an estimated \$172 billion to \$366 billion.

Medicare beneficiaries account for 14 percent of the United States population, but 43 percent of the Nation's total drug expenditures. Medicaid provides drug coverage for 12 percent of the Medicaid population, generally those with very low income. Only half of all the Medicare beneficiaries with incomes below the Federal poverty line are covered by Medicaid.

In 1998, Medicaid spent on average \$893 per elderly beneficiary for pharmaceuticals. Medicare HMOs assisted 15 percent of all beneficiaries with their drug costs in 1998, although the share dropped to about 10 percent in 2001. Virtually all Medicare beneficiaries use pharmaceuticals on a regular basis and fill an average of 22 prescriptions per year.

In 2001, the average annual out-of-pocket spending for drugs among Medicare beneficiaries is estimated to be about \$858, with 27 percent of beneficiaries expected to spend more than \$1,000. Medigap provides prescription drug benefits to approximately only 10 percent of all the Medicare beneficiaries.

I listed all of these prescription drugs statistics particularly to focus in on the fact that, across this country, there are senior citizens and others who are in a dilemma without having any type of prescription drug benefit.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to kind of engage in a colloquy with the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. THURMAN), who has been very active in the forefront on the issue of prescription drug benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. THURMAN) to discuss what she has been seeing that has occurred in the State of Florida on this issue.

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, if one can imagine, in Florida a high percentage of our seniors are in the Medicare program because we have a very high senior population. You know what I have found is interesting over the last couple of years, we have had this issue on the table. This issue is being talked about. It has been massaged. It has been looked at. We have tried to bring it to the forefront of any debate that has happened in this Congress because of exactly what the gentlewoman has put in her remarks, what is happening out there.

I think that any of us that has had any kind of work done, that one of the first issues that we have to look at is how do we make sure that the people in this country are getting the same medicines at the same cost as other countries. I do not want to hear, well, it is about research, because we hear it is about marketing research, and we have all seen the ads.

So we did, a couple of years ago, just a kind of analysis of what was happening in our State and in my district in particular, in the Fifth District, and