

MEDICARE IMPROVEMENTS FOR  
PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS ACT  
OF 2008

SPEECH OF

**HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 24, 2008*

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 6331, the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act will delay cuts in physician payments under Medicare until next year. I hope that this is the last temporary delay and next year we will implement a permanent fix to this problem. It's important to Medicare patients and physicians that there is a continuity of payments so physicians can continue to treat Medicare patients and Medicare patients do not lose access to the physician most familiar with their medical needs.

When we implement a permanent fix to the Medicare physician payment cuts, I hope to address the issue of the Medicare physician geographic payment discrepancy that is faced by many areas in California and across the country. One of these areas is Sonoma County, in my District. This inconsistency has led to doctor's reimbursements being based upon geographic location and not the true cost of providing services. Because of this discrepancy, doctors in Sonoma County receive a lower payment for the same services than doctors in next door Marin County and this discrepancy is causing doctors to leave Sonoma County. Congress must act to fix this discrepancy and ensure that physicians with Medicare patients can continue to afford to see Medicare patients regardless of where a practice is located.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6331, Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act and look forward to working together to provide a permanent solution to the Medicare physician payment issues so that our Nation's seniors receive the best possible care from the physician who knows the patient the best.

IN HONOR OF DR. J. FREDERICK  
GRASSLE

**HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 8, 2008*

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. J. Frederick Grassle on his retirement from the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Dr. Grassle served as director of the Institute for 19 years.

Under Dr. Grassle's direction, the Institute gained a national and international reputation for excellence in marine and coastal research, education and service.

Dr. Grassle's creativity and vision led to establishment of the world's first undersea observatory, commonly known as LEO-15. This achievement enabled development of the Nation's Integrated Ocean Observing System that now supports critical national missions associated with saving lives at sea, enhancing homeland security, and forecasting effects of natural disasters.

Dr. Grassle is known for his innovative thinking and many scientific achievements, which are highlighted by his pioneering work on the biology of hydrothermal vents, biodiversity, and effects of waste disposal in deep sea systems. He devoted his time and effort to ensure that the results of science were transferred in a timely manner to environmental managers and policymakers. His work on waste disposal culminated in a national policy change based on his scientific findings and testimony before Congress.

Serving the state of New Jersey, Dr. Grassle advanced novel approaches for disposal and management of contaminated sediments that helped to preserve the region's port industry and coastal-based economy. He also fostered new approaches to science education that have enriched the critical thinking skills of youth in New Jersey and throughout the Nation.

Madam Speaker, I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join me in celebrating the service of Dr. J. Frederick Grassle, a man whose deep commitment to excellence in marine and coastal research, education for all ages, and services to resource managers have enabled New Jersey to be a national and international leader in these fields.

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SPEECH OF

**HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY**

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 24, 2008*

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6331, the Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act. This important bill includes mental health parity for Medicare beneficiaries. Currently, there is a discriminatory 50-percent copayment requirement for mental health services, while a 20-percent copayment exists for physical health care services under Medicare.

As the lead sponsor of H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act, I am fighting to enact mental health parity for individuals who receive their insurance in the private sector. Federal employees, including Members of Congress, have had equal access to mental health and addiction services since 2001 with little or no cost increase. It's time for the private sector and Medicare to join in this effort to protect the health of all Americans, regardless of age or diagnosis.

In my home State of Rhode Island, I spend countless hours in senior centers and high-rises talking to my constituents, and it's clear that there is an epidemic of undiagnosed and untreated mental illness among older Americans. In fact, as many as one-quarter of seniors have significant clinical depression. But the one thing we must remember is that depression does not have to be a byproduct of aging—it isn't "normal" to get depressed as you get older. Allowing mental illness to go untreated in our seniors is not only unethical, but it increases health care costs, especially for those seniors with depression who are unable to manage their chronic illnesses.

Tragically, only 3 percent of older adults with mental illness ever seek mental health

treatment. Often, this is due to stigma. Stigma that is reinforced by our reimbursement structure that favors the treatment of our physical health over our mental health. H.R. 6331 ends this stigma by phasing in a 20-percent copayment for Medicare mental health services over 6 years. By ending arbitrary and discriminatory financial limits and making treatment more affordable, we can ensure that all seniors have access to mental health services. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6331.

HONORING FORMER VICE MAYOR  
MICKEY NOVACK OF SURFSIDE  
ON HER 90TH BIRTHDAY

**HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 8, 2008*

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor one of South Florida's most outstanding citizens, the Honorable Mickey Novack, who recently turned 90. In the aftermath of the Second World War, former Surfside vice mayor Novack left London, where she was born, and came to this country. Having arrived in New York, she later moved to Surfside, Florida, where she established herself as an exemplary citizen both in her public and family life.

Former vice mayor Novack has contributed to many different types of organizations in her community, in several different capacities. She has consistently played a proactive role in Surfside and was both the vice mayor and the commissioner of the city's government. She has also utilized her financial expertise in her positions of president of the Surfside Taxpayers Association and as the treasurer of numerous other organizations. These range from the PTA to Women in Government Service. Professional life aside, she has been the cornerstone of a family dedicated to public service, education and the improvement of their community.

The fervor and ardor with which former vice mayor Novack devoted herself to the community and her family in conjunction with her life achievements are truly inspirational. I am proud to represent her as her Congresswoman and delighted to share with you her achievements.

HONORING MR. DICK DEITZ

**HON. JOHN SHIMKUS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 8, 2008*

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor Mr. Dick Deitz of McLeansboro, Illinois.

Mr. Deitz is to be inducted into the 2008 National High School Hall of Fame, the highest honor that an individual associated with high school sports can receive. This Hall of Fame honors athletes, coaches, officials, and administrators for their extraordinary achievements in high school sports.

Mr. Deitz has been working as a football, basketball, and baseball official in Illinois since 1958 and has been the state's rules interpreter in basketball and baseball since 1976.