

health care, renewable energy, education and jobs. Those aren't just domestic needs. They are critical parts of our national security.

The administration, Mr. Speaker, has tried to solve all of our problems with military force alone. That strategy has been a miserable failure. We cannot bomb or torture our way to victory in the fight against terrorism. We must work to end the poverty and the despair that caused it. The sooner we learn that lesson, the safer America will be.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### AMERICA'S EPIDEMIC OF HEALTH CARE-ACQUIRED INFECTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TIM MURPHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it seems like every day in this House floor we call for a moment of silence to recognize some tragic loss of life across our country. And it is fitting that we do so.

If we were to recognize with a moment of silence those who die in hospitals from avoidable infections, we would be stopping House business many times each day.

So I am here to express my concern that we continue to ignore the increasing problem and potentially fatal epidemic of health care-acquired infections. Another week goes by and more and more patients are becoming infected with preventable infections. And instead of tackling this issue head-on, we continue to let the number of cases rise. And the costs strains our health care system, and more lives are lost.

Well enough is enough. This year alone, up to today, there have been 1,243,835 cases of health care-acquired infections. There have been a total of 61,562 deaths. And the total cost on our health care system has been \$31 billion 95 million 999,420.07. By the end of this year, that estimate will be \$50 billion and 100,000 lives lost.

Something must be done. We must put self-interests aside and work together to improve the safety of our hospitals. And I am committed to making sure this happens. That is why I introduced legislation last year that saves lives and money, H.R. 1174, the Healthy Hospitals Act. And it has received strong bipartisan support and support from consumer groups.

This legislation offers a simple solution to lower the costs associated with health care-acquired infections. It is not expensive. It simply requires hospitals to publicly disclose their infection rates and let the public see this transparently.

□ 2015

Hospitals should be taking commonsense measures, like washing hands, sterilizing equipment between uses, testing patients and giving antibiotics at the right time. It is, after all, people's lives we are trying to save.

How can a hospital or health care system argue that they don't want to report their infection rates if reporting is shown to save lives? How can hospitals complain that they don't want patients to know about patient safety and patient quality? Aren't hospitals supposed to be in the business of saving lives?

Hospitals need to be held accountable for opposing legislation, for opposing legislation, that would require reporting, because evidence shows it makes a difference. In my home State of Pennsylvania, there are shining examples of what happens when hospitals are held accountable for reporting.

Hospitals in Pennsylvania are required by State law to make their infection rates public, and we have seen the infection rates drop dramatically. Some hospitals were able to get to a zero infection rate, no lives lost. And here is the mortality statistic. According to the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council, the average charge of hospitalization for a patient who became infected with a hospital-acquired infection was \$185,000 each, while the average charge for a patient without an infection was \$31,000. Reporting infections is proven to save money and lives.

Hospitals say "it will cost us more to keep track of it." That simply is not true. Isn't this enough to get our hospitals on board? Isn't this enough proof to save lives? Our health care system is in need of repair, not just simply saying it is too expensive, let's let government take it over. It needs to be fixed.

While we continue to talk about reforming government, cutting costs and eliminating funding for infrastructure projects back home, I hope my colleagues in the health care industry will support commonsense legislation that will save money and lives.

Public reporting of health care acquired infections is exactly what it sounds like, but the benefits of this simple action are far reaching. I hope that patients and their families will speak up to Members of Congress about the need for this transparency and demand such legislation be enacted.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all my colleagues and hospitals around the country, especially those hospitals that know this saves lives and money, to support public reporting of hospital-acquired infections. Let's do this right. Let's save lives. After all, the families of so many Americans are at stake here. We can act on this. We can make a difference. We can save lives and save money.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR ALL AMERICANS

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, we have a health care crisis in America. Rising health care costs are overwhelming individuals, families and businesses, large and small. We have a staggering 41 million individuals, nearly one in six Americans, without health insurance. In America, that is just not fair.

Millions more Americans have only catastrophic coverage, with \$5,000 to \$15,000 deductibles. Others have policies with copays so high that basic health care needs, including preventive and diagnostic service, are not met. Many families are literally one serious illness away from bankruptcy.

To fix our broken economy, we have to fix our broken health care system. We must build a stronger, more effective health care system before it is too late. The future of our country and our ability to compete in the global economy depend on it. I believe that every American has a right to quality, affordable health care that doesn't blunt the competitive edge of employers or unduly burden taxpayers. It is time for bold action.

I have created the Healthy Americans Plan to relieve the strain on families and individuals, ease the burden on businesses and nonprofits and drive down costs. It builds on the strengths of the existing American health care system, but provides new and better choices for businesses, the self-employed, families and individuals.

My plan will offer quality, affordable health insurance choices like those available to Members of Congress. My plan will help small businesses offer employee health coverage by providing them with a refundable tax credit. It also improves access to medical care in rural areas and provides relief for middle-class families and individuals who are struggling to afford health insurance.

The key elements of my plan include the following:

All Americans, including the self-employed and owners and employees of small businesses, will be guaranteed the freedom to purchase a quality plan that is affordable and right for them.

Americans who like their current health care coverage will have the security of knowing they can keep it.

Insurers will have to compete for business on the basis of cost and quality, not by profiting from and discriminating against people because of age or preexisting conditions.

National choices will include private plans as well as a nationwide option, a