

Yllescas was strong enough to survive a lengthy medical evacuation which eventually brought him to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. With Dena and other family members at his side, Captain Yllescas underwent almost daily surgeries in the hope of recovery. Dena Yllescas chronicled his hospitalization on an Internet blog which drew tens of thousands of readers. Friends, relatives and total strangers all followed Captain Yllescas's progress and prayed for his recovery. President George W. Bush made a special trip to the medical center and awarded Captain Yllescas the Purple Heart in a brief ceremony on November 10.

Captain Yllescas knew the dangers he faced and the risks he took. He also knew the importance of the work he did in the Army on behalf of his fellow Americans. He risked and ultimately sacrificed his own life so that people a world away could have the chance to enjoy the freedoms he had found in America.

Captain Yllescas is survived by his wife, Dena, and daughters Julia, age 7, and Eva, 10 months; parents, Barbara Yllescas of Lincoln and Otto Yllescas of Guatemala; a brother, Christopher of Columbia, MO; and two sisters, Jennifer Winterbauer of Lincoln and Natalie Yllescas of Guatemala.

The life and service of Captain Yllescas represents an example we can all look up to and seek to emulate. He served his country honorably and made the ultimate sacrifice in furtherance of a much larger goal. Captain Yllescas made the most of his short life, and the greatest tragedy is that now it is impossible to know what more this promising young man might have accomplished. I join all Nebraskans in mourning the loss of Captain Yllescas and in offering my deepest condolences to his family.

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#### GULF WAR ILLNESS RESEARCH FUNDING

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to review the findings of the congressionally mandated Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses. This report, which was released a few weeks ago, confirms what many veterans of the Gulf War, lawmakers, physicians, and researchers have long suspected that the mysterious illnesses suffered by one in four gulf war veterans are real, and are a result of their exposure to neurotoxic chemicals.

It was not long after the successful conclusion of the gulf war that many of

our soldiers returned home with multiple persistent symptoms including headaches, memory loss, gastrointestinal problems, and widespread pain. The symptoms were real, yet the cause and effective treatment have remained frustratingly elusive. As a leading member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I pushed hard for oversight hearings and continued research efforts.

Finally, 17 years after the end of that conflict, this report confirms that veterans' neurotoxin and pesticide exposure during the gulf war has been consistently found to be causally associated with gulf war illness. Unfortunately, this report also concludes that few veterans have recovered from their exposure, and treatments remain ineffective. While it is important that the cause of this illness has been established, it is unacceptable for our veterans to continue to suffer from these wounds of war.

In light of the findings of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, there must be a continued investment in gulf war illness research. It is estimated that 175,000 to 210,000 gulf war veterans are suffering from the effects of neurotoxin exposure directly related to their time spent in the Gulf. Once again, hundreds of thousands of soldiers find themselves back in the area as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Therefore, it is vital that we do all that we can to adequately fund gulf war research.

We also need to learn the lesson of the value of candor and research. DOD and VA must be more open with Congress about the concerns facing our troops, from neurotoxin and pesticide exposures in the gulf war to the troubling issue of suicide, mental health issues, and traumatic brain injury, TBI, in the current conflict. We must address all the wounds of war, both visible and invisible, for our veterans who have served so bravely.

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#### GENERIC MEDICINES

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I rise today to bring to my colleagues' attention a recent article in the respected *Journal of American Medicine* on generic medicines. The article comes at a critical time as we begin to tackle the important issue of health care reform.

There is no doubt that health care reform must include offering solutions that reduce skyrocketing health care costs. One solution to reducing costs is to increase access to generic medicines, which offer savings of up to 80 percent over brand drug costs.

The new JAMA article provides specific evidence on the benefits of generic medicines. The analysis, which included U.S. scientists reviewing more than 20 years of research on generic versus brand name drugs, found that there is no clinical evidence showing that brand name cardiovascular drugs were superior to their generic versions. Moreover, the lead author of the report noted that generics can lead to better outcomes because they cost less, which means patients can afford to take them and stay on them.

As our economy continues to struggle, Americans across the country are looking for ways to make ends meet. We hear too often about older Americans rationing their medicines and even mothers watering down infant formula to make it last longer, not knowing of the dangerous health impact this can have. A recent survey conducted by BearingPoint, Inc., and Zogby found that an alarming number of consumers admitted that they would consider denying themselves or their children health care to save money during this difficult economic time.

As we consider the critical and inter-related issues regarding the economic crisis and reform of national health care, the new JAMA study supports every effort we can make now to increase the use of generic medicines. We should remove the numerous barriers to getting generic medicines to consumers sooner rather than later, and we must prevent the creation of new barriers that will impede greater use of generics. We also should consider how to create a workable pathway for biogenerics, a pathway that actually gets these safe and affordable life-saving medicines to patients in a timely manner.

Generic medicines save consumers and State and Federal governments billions of dollars annually. At the same time, generic medicines are FDA approved, guaranteeing their safety and effectiveness.

When the new Congress tackles the important health care initiatives that lie ahead, the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs must remain a top priority. As the medical evidence concludes, Congress can have confidence in the fact that increasing access to generic medicines will provide high-quality care at significant cost savings for consumers and the government.

I ask unanimous consent to have the article to which I referred printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows: