

the Taliban insurgency and the increased violence in Afghanistan, this pledge is unlikely to be met.

Deaths in the region have climbed over the past few months, and the area lacks any significant government authority. What's more, how can Pakistan ensure these militants will follow through on this agreement without any substantial pressure? The record is abominable, and there is nothing holding them to their word.

Madam Speaker, the U.S. must proceed with caution with Pakistan. Even though it has helped capture some of the al Qaeda leadership, these efforts are nothing more than superficial attempts at camaraderie. The fact remains Pakistan cannot be wholly trusted as a legitimate supporter of U.S. goals and interests in South Asia until it proactively disarms all militias and dismantles the jihad infrastructure.

They must also either actively seek out bin Laden and his associates or allow the U.S. forces to do so. They need to distinguish between simply assisting the U.S. war on terrorism and truly defending the world's freedom against terrorism.

□ 1930

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

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

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE HEALTH CARE PRICE TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, America has the best health care system in the world. That is not to say there is not some room for improvement. There exists, currently, a tangle of medical bureaucracies, and many times no one has a clear picture of what the problem is.

Physicians and other providers don't get paid enough and don't get paid on time. Patients pay too much. Many people don't get any care at all, and everyone claims that someone else needs to change in order to fix the problem. Before we start changing things, however, it does seem prudent to more fully understand the problem.

Today, I have introduced legislation with that goal in mind. This is another step toward true price transparency in the health care market.

The Health Care Price Transparency Act of 2006 is a long-term solution to

runaway medical costs. This bill calls upon the States to establish and maintain laws requiring disclosure of information on hospital charges. To make such information available to the public and to provide individuals with information about estimated out-of-pocket costs for health care services. Indeed, well over 30 States have passed or will soon pass their own transparency legislation, so an idea that is already in process.

This legislation means that State law will require health insurance providers to give actual patients an actual dollar estimate of what the patient will pay for health care items and services within a specified period of time.

Additionally, the bill calls for research on the type of cost information that individuals find useful in making health care decisions, how this information varies according to an individual's health insurance coverage and, if so, by what type of coverage, and finally, ways that information may be distributed in a timely and simple manner. Price, cost and quality. This is what our patients are asking us for, information about these three parameters, and it is prudent to make this information available to consumers. Simple but important provisions.

The current health insurance system has insulated people from the actual cost of medical care that they receive. By pulling back the curtain on capacity in the health care market, over time, this legislation will lead to the development of more rational pricing, a more rational pricing structure from the consumer's perspective. Once we understand the actual cost, then we can begin to make effective changes, leading to fairer physician reimbursement, appropriate patient billing and better medical services.

Part of the bill will deal with the rules of construction under the State laws. States with previously established laws that meet requirements are not required to change their laws. Previously established laws that do not meet requirements need only to change their laws as necessary to meet the requirements. States that currently have voluntary disclosure on hospital charges will still need to adopt laws.

In August, President Bush issued an executive order calling for increased transparency within the Federal Government's health care agencies, a good first step. This legislation is an extension of that executive order, giving States the tools to become a part of the necessary solution for health care consumers.

Madam Speaker, the time is short in this legislative session, but I believe this is legislation that the House can take up and get passed in short order.

#### SUPPORT SEPTEMBER 11 VICTIMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Madam Speaker, yesterday this country certainly was there to remember 9/11. Back in my district on Long Island where I lost so many families, so many of the firemen and so many of the first responders, it was a sad day for all of us. The wonderful thing was that America again came together. The wonderful thing was that the communities came together to be there for the families.

What I would like to talk about is that we have forgotten, though, the heroes. We have forgotten those that have physical injuries still today and certainly health care issues that they are facing. But I also would like to talk about the children, the children that lost their parents.

I have a wonderful center in my district called the World Trade Family Center, and it has been a godsend for so many of my families that come there on a weekly basis that children, sometimes even more, receive psychological, friendship care, training for their parents on how to deal with grief, because I know a lot of times people don't know how to handle their grief.

But I think the thing that bothers me more is that with the World Trade Family Center, they don't have any more money. I am scrounging around to try to find grants to keep this center open, because a lot of times people don't understand that when you go through a tragic event like 9/11, the first year, the second year, basically you are just on automatic reflex. It is the third and the fourth year that it starts to sink in on what's happened to them and their families and how their lives have changed forever.

You know, everyone keeps saying we will never forget. Well, unfortunately, we are forgetting.

When I see my first responders come into my office, they are having an illness that is taking them away from their job, and many of these men and women are very young. But because they were there for 9/11 and the weeks that followed, and a lot of my union workers that were down there, cleaning up with all of their heart and soul, trying to find survivors, and then just recovery, we as a nation say that we will always be there for you, and yet the money has run out.

I think this Nation, this country, the American people who gave their hearts and souls after 9/11 by donating blood, donating their time, sending money into all the different organizations, and that money was used, and it was used in a very good way.

But when I look at the World Trade Family Center, that looks like it is going to be closing its doors because it doesn't have the funding, and it is just starting to reach the children, you have to understand the children, and you have to understand victims. A lot of times they wear masks so that if somebody says how are you doing, they automatically say, I am doing fine, I am doing okay.