

home health professionals are facing while delivering service to our Nation's seniors. Too many home health providers have seen not only declining reimbursement but also increasing fuel costs.

Last week, the New York Times highlighted how these challenges are affecting several Michigan families and home health providers. Sadly, this is a problem facing the entire Nation. The National Association for Home Care & Hospice's, NAHC, Foundation for Hospice and Homecare released a study finding that nurses, therapists, and home care aides who serve chronically ill elderly and disabled patients drive nearly 5 billion miles each year. But escalating gasoline prices threaten their ability to reach their patients, particularly in rural areas. NAHC reported that, in Michigan, home health providers drove over 161 million miles to make nearly 12 million visits to seniors and other patients in need of homebound services.

As a short-term solution, I urge my colleagues to join with me in calling for the Medicare rural home-health add-on, which expired in 2006, to be reinstated. The rural add-on bonus will have a huge impact on the ability of home health providers to serve seniors, particularly in remote, rural locations.

I ask that a copy of the New York Times article be printed in the RECORD. The material follows:

[From the New York Times, July 5, 2008]

AS GAS PRICES SOAR, ELDERLY FACE CUTS IN AID

(By John Leland)

SOUTH HAVEN, MICH.—Early last month, Jeanne Fair, 62, got her first hot meals delivered to her home in this lake town in the sparsely populated southwestern part of the state. Then after two deliveries the meals stopped because gas prices had made the delivery too expensive.

"They called and said I was outside of the delivery area," said Mrs. Fair, who is homebound and has not been able to use her left arm since a stroke in 1997.

Faced with soaring gasoline prices, agencies around the country that provide services to the elderly say they are having to cut back on programs like Meals on Wheels, transportation assistance and home care, especially in rural areas that depend on volunteers who provide their own gas. In a recent survey by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, more than half said they had already cut back on programs because of gas costs, and 90 percent said they expected to make cuts in the 2009 fiscal year.

"I've never seen the increase in need at this level," said Robert McFalls, chief executive of the Area Agency on Aging in Palm Beach, Fla., whose office has a waiting list of 1,500 people. Volunteers who deliver meals or drive the elderly to medical appointments have cut back their miles, Mr. McFalls said.

Public agencies of all kinds are struggling with the new math of higher gas prices, lower property and sales tax revenues and increases in the minimum wage. Some communities have cut school bus routes, police patrols, traveling libraries and lawn maintenance. The St. Paul Police Department is encouraging officers to use horses and bikes. A number of state agencies, including those in Utah, are going to four-day workweeks to save energy costs and reduce commuting expenses for their employees.

But older poor people and those who are homebound are doubly squeezed by rising gas

and food prices, because they rely not just on social service agencies, but also on volunteers.

In the survey of agencies, more than 70 percent said it was more difficult to recruit and keep volunteers.

Mrs. Fair, who has limited mobility because of diabetes, lives on \$642 per month in Social Security widow's benefits, and relies on care from her son, who often works odd hours, especially during blueberry season. "He says, 'You belong in a nursing home; I can't take care of you,'" Mrs. Fair said.

The delivered meals allowed her to eat at regular hours, which helped her control her blood sugar levels, she said. Last year she lost her balance during a change in blood sugar and spent a month in a nursing home.

With no meal delivery in her area, Mrs. Fair said her home aide, who comes three times a week, must pick up frozen meals from a center in the next town.

"If my aide can't get the meals, maybe I can get my pastor to pick them up," Mrs. Fair said. "I can't travel even to the drop-off center."

Val J. Halamandaris, president of the National Association for Home Care and Hospice, said that rising fuel prices had become a significant burden for the 7,000 agencies represented by his group, with some forced to close and others compelled to shrink their service areas or reduce face-to-face visits with patients.

A recent survey by the group concluded that home health and hospice workers drove 4.8 billion miles in 2006 to serve 12 million clients. "If we lose these agencies in rural areas, we'll never get them back," Mr. Halamandaris said.

The agencies, which have suffered from Medicare cuts in recent years, are lobbying Congress to account for fuel inflation in reimbursement rates and to reinstate special increases for providers in rural areas, a program that expired in 2006.

In Union, Mich., a town among flat corn and soybean farms near the Indiana border, Bill Harman, 77, relies on a home aide to take care of his wife, Evelyn, who is 85 and has Alzheimer's disease. Mr. Harman has had to use a wheelchair since 2000 because of hip problems.

But the aide, Katie Clark, 26, may have to give up the job. She lives 25 miles away and drives 700 miles a week to provide twice-daily visits, helping Mrs. Harman dress in the morning and get to bed at night, feeding her, doing chores around the house. "And putting up with a grumpy old man," she said jokingly to Mr. Harman. Her weekly income of \$250 is being eaten up by gas expenses, which come to \$100 a week.

"Some weeks I have to borrow money to get here," said Ms. Clark, a single mother of two, adding, "They're just like family to me."

Agencies say they are facing a shortage of home aides, because the jobs have low pay and often require long drives for a few hours of work. "They can't make any money," said Laurence Schmidt, administrator for the Oswego County Office for the Aging, in rural northwest New York. "So they'll get jobs in nursing homes, where they can drive to one place and work a full shift. That is a statewide problem."

Mr. Harman said that he thought a previous aide might have abused his wife, but that Mrs. Harman was comfortable with Ms. Clark. On a recent afternoon, Mrs. Harman called Mrs. Clark "honey"; Ms. Clark, walking Mrs. Harman to the bathroom, kissed her nose. Mrs. Harman said she was going home. Ms. Clark said, "You are home, silly."

For her work, Ms. Clark receives \$9 an hour. If she leaves, Mr. Harman said, he could not care for his wife.

He said that when they married, she raised his five children as if they were her own. When Mrs. Harman started to develop Alz-

heimer's 8 or 10 years ago, he said, "I promised her, 'Don't worry, I'll take care of you as long as I can.'"

Without an aide, he said, he would have to put his wife in a nursing home, and probably need to live in one himself.

For many isolated older people, home delivery of meals provides not just nutrition but also regular contact with the outside world, said Elaine Eubank, president of CareLink, a nonprofit agency that serves elderly people in six counties in Arkansas, delivering 480,181 meals to 18,000 people last year. Because of gas prices, Ms. Eubank said, one center in Monroe County had closed its kitchen, and others were delivering frozen meals two days a week.

Mary Margaret Cox, executive director of Meals on Wheels in Greeley, Colo., which serves meals to 300 people a day, said that her agency was trying to avoid shifting to frozen meals, but that it was getting hard to recruit students and teachers who volunteer during the summer.

"Most don't have anyone else checking up on them daily," Mrs. Cox said of her clients. "If we do more frozen meals, they'll lose that daily contact."

Many agencies said their revenues—which come from state, federal and private sources—were not keeping up with their increased expenses. "We've had one increase from Medicaid in 11 years," Ms. Eubank said. "But home care and Meals on Wheels keep people at home for a fraction of the cost of a nursing home. The state pays for care once they're in a nursing home. So our cuts may cost more than they save."

Sandra Prediger, 70, who still drives a car, said higher gas prices hit her every time she needed to go to the doctor. From her senior apartment in South Haven, she was barely able to pay her bills before gas prices rose.

"I try to help some of the ladies around here, driving them to doctors or to the store," Miss Prediger said, but a round trip to her doctor or the beauty shop now costs \$26 in gas. She has had to ask her friends to pay half. "I hate to ask," she said, "because they have less than me."

Her Social Security check arrives on the third of the month. For the few days before, her local gas station lets her write a postdated check to fill up.

On July 2, Miss Prediger had no money and owed money to the gas station. "In a few minutes," she said, "my friend Shirley will probably call and say, 'Can you take me to Wal-Mart to get needles for my diabetes?' What else can I do?"

Barbara Blumka, 67, of Buchanan, Mich., said she would continue delivering 15 or 16 meals a week though she could not afford it. She is driving a Dodge Caravan, a "gas guzzler," she said.

"I see these people's faces," said Ms. Blumka, who gets her meals at a senior center. "They're so appreciative. I think of all the people who took care of my mother in the nursing home. This is my way of giving thanks."

Christine Vanlandingham, development officer for the three-county Area Agency on Aging, said that in three to six months, the agency would have to start cutting meal deliveries to clients who get them now.

But Ms. Blumka will continue to help the homebound. Her nieces and nephews were buying her an adult tricycle for other travels. "It's neon blue," she said. "I'll ride it to the senior center."●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING ST. STEPHEN'S COMMUNITY HOUSE

● Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today I honor the efforts of St. Stephen's Community House to designate July 10, 2008, Summer Learning Day.

Located in Columbus, OH, St. Stephen's Community House has worked tirelessly to increase awareness of the importance of summer learning programs. Summer breaks in schooling can lead to significant academic loss, particularly among students in low-income areas. The efforts of St. Stephen's Community House to partner with the Ohio Department of Education and other community organizations help ensure that children all across Ohio have access to high quality summer enrichment programs. Its work provides students with meaningful summer activity and helps reduce the growing achievement gap in education.

In addition, St. Stephen's Community House has demonstrated its commitment to the community through its work with the Children's Hunger Alliance and Major League Soccer. Almost half of Ohioans living in poverty are under 24 years old, yet only 57,000 out of 500,000 eligible children participate in Ohio's Summer Food Service program. Working together, these organizations are expanding summer feeding programs and ensuring that all Ohio children have access to nutrition throughout the summer months.

The dedication of the staff and volunteers of St. Stephen's Community House to the needs of some of the most vulnerable members of our communities serves as an inspiration to us all. I hope my colleagues will join me in wishing them the best of luck in their future endeavors.●

IDAHO STUDENTS WIN FUEL CELL CAR COMPETITION

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, on June 20, five Treasure Valley Math and Science Center, TVMSC, students won first place overall in the Hydrogen Fuel Cell Model Car Challenge, an alternative energy model competition held in conjunction with National Science Bowl. The team, consisting of Alex Baca, Andrew Hoth, Kevin Brown and Eddie Smith, and alternate Paul Schroeder, also took fifth place honors in the National Science Bowl. The competition challenged students to design, build and race fuel cell model cars. The three components on which students were judged were the design document, a presentation of the use of hydrogen in transportation, and the race itself. The team was coached by Mark Anderson, physics teacher at TVMSC, Tony Baca of Hewlett Packard, and Barbara Jorden, legislative director for the Idaho Trial Lawyers Association. The team qualified for Nationals after sweeping the regional competition with eight trophies, four of which were for first place.

Alex, Kevin, Andrew, Paul and Eddie are all highly accomplished students, even as seventh and eighth-graders. Their interests range from the science disciplines of geography, earth science, chemistry, math, biology and computer science to liberal arts disciplines such

as history and English. Their hobbies range from reading, painting, playing music and video and board games to drama, making scale models and playing air soft. The boys also participate in sports including football, soccer and tennis. The breadth of their interests and involvement will prepare them well for success in high school, college and the future careers of their choosing.

The Department of Energy, DOE, created the National Science Bowl competition in 1991 to help promote math and science education in high school and highlight the successes of students who excel in these fields. In 2002, DOE expanded the competition to middle school students.

Idaho can be proud of these exemplary students and their coaches for outstanding performance in the National Science Bowl and Hydrogen Fuel Cell Model Car Challenge. Idaho's strong heritage of math, science and engineering continues in our young people, keeping our State's student academic standards high and helping prepare Idaho youth for rewarding careers in these fields.●

HONORING THE MANSFIELD, OHIO, GARDEN CLUB

● Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today I commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Mansfield Garden Club.

Since its founding in 1928, the Garden Club has worked diligently to serve the Mansfield community. During World War II, members demonstrated their civic commitment by raising Victory Gardens and replacing their flowers with fruits and vegetables, thereby reducing pressure on the public food supply and boosting community morale. The club's continued work on community improvements over the years has been recognized with numerous awards recognizing their commitment to the community. Today, the club's efforts have provided floral plantings at the Mansfield Lahm Airport, landscaping at the Mansfield General Hospital, and a large circular garden in the city's central park.

For more than eight decades, the Mansfield Garden Club's members have demonstrated profound dedication to culture and community and have served as an inspiration to us all. I hope my colleagues will join me in wishing them the best of luck in their future endeavors.●

HONORING CEECEE LYLES

● Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, on September 11, 2001, thousands of Americans tragically lost their lives, but the legacies of their lives endure. One of those individuals was CeeCee Lyles, a flight attendant who perished in Pennsylvania on United Airlines Flight 93.

CeeCee was a loving mother, a dedicated wife, and determined individual who spent her life fulfilling dreams. CeeCee was born and raised in Fort

Pierce, FL, where she attended Fort Pierce Westwood High School. She raised two sons on her own while working for 6 years as a Fort Pierce police officer. As a police officer, CeeCee earned the reputation of being a tough crime fighter. In 2000, she married Lorne Lyles and the family relocated to Fort Myers. In the face of financial hardships, CeeCee held two jobs, one at a local hospital and the other at a powerplant to help care for her sons. In her spare time, CeeCee volunteered at Restoration House, a Christian women's shelter in Fort Pierce.

Eventually, CeeCee walked away from police work to pursue her lifelong dream of becoming a flight attendant. She was part of the flight crew that helped to overpower the terrorists responsible for hijacking Flight 93 and successfully kept them from reaching their intended target. On the day she died, she left little doubt that she loved her husband and children. From the plane, she told her husband in a voicemail: "I want to tell you that I love you. I love you. Please tell my children that I love them very much."

In honor of CeeCee's heroism, courage, and dedication to serving others, the city of Fort Pierce has already commissioned a sculpture of her for permanent remembrance. As Senator of the State she called home, it would give me great pleasure to recognize Ms. CeeCee Lyles by placing her name on a community facility so others will remember the great American she became during her brief but full life. I call upon my colleagues to join me in honoring a truly great Floridian and exemplary American by renaming the post office at 1717 Orange Avenue in Fort Pierce the CeeCee Ross Lyles Post Office.●

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 3236. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to extend provisions under Medicare and Medicaid programs, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 3257. A bill to extend immigration programs to promote legal immigration and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-7090. A communication from the Director, Office of Energy Policy and New Uses, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Designation of Biobased Items for Federal Procurement" (RIN0503-AA32) received on