on U.S. and Japan communications and trade promotion. Throughout her long career as a corporate leader and community and civic activist, Edie Fraser has been deeply devoted to her family and friends, above all to her beloved husband, Joe Oppenheimer.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing the enormous contributions to our civic and political life made by Edie D. Fraser, a leader, activist, and philanthropist in the finest traditions of our great republic.

HONORING DANBURY VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION (VNA)

HON. CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2011

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Danbury Visiting Nurse Association (VNA), which is commemorating its 100th anniversary this year. Founded originally as the Visiting Nurse Association of Danbury in 1911, the Danbury VNA continues to provide a valuable service for thousands of people in Western Connecticut.

As the Greater Danbury's oldest home care agency, the Danbury VNA serves patients from a number of towns in my district outside of Danbury including, Bethel, Brookfield, New Fairfield, Newtown, Redding, Southbury, Woodbury and Ridgefield.

Dr. Sophia Penfield, the first licensed female physician in the State of Connecticut, along with members of the Civic Club of Danbury, established the Agency to provide care for the sick and needy, to instruct families in the care of the sick in their homes, and to teach the principles of simple sanitation and hygiene.

Founding member and first president, Mrs. John Downs served as President for an astonishing 47 years. Following her death in 1957, a recognized Board of Directors adopted the present constitution and by-laws and the agency became the Danbury Visiting Nurse Association, Inc. With the advent of Medicare, Danbury VNA became a Medicare certified home health agency in 1966. In 1993, the Agency joined the Danbury Health Systems as the home care affiliate and is now an affiliate of the recently formed Western Connecticut Healthcare, which includes New Milford Hospital.

The Danbury VNA has been a longtime advocate of preventative care for children. The agency established well child clinics nearly 75 years ago to provide physicals and inoculations. Nearly 15 years ago, the Danbury VNA recognized the challenges that many people have in getting to their physician's office by establishing the Wellness on Wheels program. This unique mobile health program for families with limited access to medical care brings a doctor, registered nurse, a social worker and others out to the community to provide critical health care services to underserved Connecticut residents free of charge. Services include physicals, screenings and immunizations for school and work.

While much has changed in light of advances in nursing practices and technology, the vision of the Civic Club and Dr. Penfield have not. The core of the Danbury Visiting Nurse Association is reflected in its mission and philosophy to serve the community, treating patients with dignity and respect and providing home care and community health services to all in need.

I want to thank the Danbury Visiting Nurse Association for all that they do and I am pleased to congratulate them on their 100th anniversary.

CONGRATULATIONS TO WEIRTON MADONNA HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM ON BECOMING STATE CHAMPS

HON. DAVID B. McKINLEY

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2011

Mr. McKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, congratulations to West Virginia's Weirton Madonna High School Boys Basketball Team on winning their first state championship on March 19, 2011. The Blue Dons had a close game against Morgantown Trinity Christian High School, pulling off a win with a final score of 44–42. They finished with a record of 24–3. Both teams played with spirit and enthusiasm but the Northern Panhandle's very own Blue Dons were victorious. Much-deserved congratulations should go out to all of the Blue Don coaches: head coach George Vargo, and his assistants Mike Hagg, Chris Blair and Michael Battista. Coach Vargo and the leadership of his assistant coaches throughout the years have made positive impacts in the lives of their players, former and current. The young men of the Blue Dons basketball team should hold their heads high and know they have made all of their community very proud. They played like champions, and they have a fan in Congress.

MEDICARE PHYSICIAN PAYMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ASSESSMENT ACT OF 2011

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2011

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the Affordable Care Act includes key provisions to increase availability of primary care doctors. For example, it will pay a 10 percent Medicare bonus, expand loan forgiveness programs and create flexibility within the National Health Service Corps. However, and underlying persistent problem exists in Medicare that must be corrected if we are to make primary care sustainable.

No single factor is driving the workforce crisis in medicine more than the income gap between certain procedure-heavy specialists and primary care/cognitive specialists. Last October the Wall Street Journal published an expose of the American Medical Association's Specialty Society Relative Value Scale Update Committee, also known as the ''RUC''.

For two decades the RUV, a specialist-dominated panel, has encouraged national health care reimbursement policies that financially undervalue the essential and complex work of primary care providers and cognitive specialists, while favoring sometimes unnecessarily complex, costly and excessive specialty medical services. This imbalance drives results down for patients and drives medical costs even higher.

The RUC's votes are not open to the public, yet Medicare has mostly rubber-stamped the RUC's recommendations over 90 percent of the time. Since the creation of the RUC in 1991, the income disparity between primary care versus procedure-heavy specialists has exploded.

Today, I'm introducing a bill called the, ''Medicare Physician Payment Transparency and Assessment Act of 2011'' that will put a transparent light on the way CMS identifies and values health care services. My bill would add public and transparent data collected from independent analysts to compare to the RUC's recommendations. It would also use independent analytic contractors to conduct surveys and collect data for physician services paid under Medicare and to annually identify services that may be over or under-valued.

I am proud to note that this bill is endorsed by the American Academy of Family Physicians and the Society of General Internal Medicine.

It's time we let taxpayers, the citizens who pay the bills for Medicare, see for themselves how Medicare decides how much to pay doctors and for what.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 12TH ANNUAL MARCH IS RED CROSS MONTH GALA AND THE FORMATION OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2011

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 12th Annual March Is Red Cross Month Gala and the formation of the American Red Cross in the National Capital Region.

The gala is traditionally held in the Prince William community to commemorate the work of the local chapter of the American Red Cross. This year's event also celebrates the establishment of the American Red Cross in the National Capital Region, which now serves the communities of Prince William, Loudoun, Fairfax, Arlington, and Alexandria in Virginia, the District of Columbia and Prince George's and Montgomery in Maryland.

Our community is enriched in many ways by the American Red Cross in the National Capital Region. The American Red Cross shelters feed and provide emotional support to victims of disasters; supply nearly half of the nation's blood donation stockpile; teach lifesaving skills; provide international humanitarian aid; and support military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission.

Red Cross offices in Northern Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia are combining their operations to deliver a seamless system that carries out the mission of the American Red Cross. The strength of the American Red Cross and the commitment of