

The New Braunfels Independent School District has demonstrated an exceptional dedication to expand the educational horizons of its students, particularly in science. Together, the New Braunfels Independent School District and Alamo Community College District have invited a keynote speaker, Dr. Lawrence Lowery from the Lawrence Hall of Science at U.C. Berkeley, to discuss the topic "How Students Learn." The United States Marine Corps will be on hand to present \$10,000 for an Annenberg Satellite Dish for use in all schools in New Braunfels. The commitment of the school districts, the support of the parents, and the generosity of the community will help expand the horizons of our children.

Science is key to understanding the world we live in. It is important for our students to have the type of hands-on education in science that is both challenging and rewarding. Without exposure to the sciences early on, our students will be left behind on the road of educational advancement. We have seen time and again that a commitment to higher standards of education is a commitment to excellence and a commitment to our future.

I would like to commend the New Braunfels Independent School District for its focus on its students. The efforts of teachers, parents, and a community of supporters will help us reach our common goal, academic excellence and a love of learning.

WILT CHAMBERLAIN'S
PENNSYLVANIA LEGACY

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 13, 1999

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to one of the greatest basketball players, and one of the most magnificent Pennsylvanians that ever lived. As the Representative from Hershey, Pennsylvania, I have a unique remembrance of Wilton Norman Chamberlain.

On the tragic occasion of his death we remember his awesome physical stature and stunning agility, his God given athletic prowess. Inevitably, we recall what is one of the greatest feats in all of sport: Wilt Chamberlain's 100 point game. Chamberlain's 100 point game, a record that will surely stand through the next millennium, took place on March 2, 1962, in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Wilt Chamberlain, a Philadelphia native, began his career with the Philadelphia Warriors in 1959. He remained loyal to his team for many years, and to people all over Pennsylvania, as evidenced by the game at Hershey. To his credit and the credit of the NBA, the value of bringing professional basketball to people in reaches otherwise untouched by the big city teams was well recognized.

Wilt Chamberlain's 100 point game will be remembered as one of the greatest athletic accomplishments of all time. But it will be remembered by the people of Hershey for the great and imposing presence that left its impression there 37 years ago, and remains to this day.

BALANCED BUDGET ACT CUTS TO
MEDICARE

HON. JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 13, 1999

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, Maine hospitals, home health agencies, and skilled nursing facilities are in a state of crisis. Congress must address this issue before we recess for the year.

I am proud of the fact that Maine health institutions are efficient and perform above the norm nationwide in regards to quality of care. But now our providers, especially those in rural areas, are suffering disproportionately under the Balanced Budget Act Medicare cuts, and our resources are stretched to the limit. With the BBA Medicare cuts, our hospitals will lose \$338 million over 5 years.

Maine has the lowest Medicare inpatient operating margins in the country. In fact, our operating margins are in the negative. Because of these already too-low Medicare reimbursement rates, any cuts to Medicare hurt Maine that much harder. There are no more margins left to cut. Cost shifting will occur and this will hurt all Maine citizens.

One area which particularly concerns me and my constituents is the effect of the interim payment system on home health agencies. The burden home health agencies have been asked to bear is extreme, especially when considering that the losses are spread among only 40 providers in the state. I hope that a fix can be developed for home health providers that includes the elimination of the 15 percent reduction in payments due to begin October 2000. Home health agencies in my district also ask that an outlier payment be added to the Interim Payment System to adequately account for high-need, high-cost patients. A flexible overpayment schedule, interest-free, would be helpful to providers, as well as a gradual raise in the per beneficiary limits for agencies falling under the national median and the extension of Periodic Interim Payments.

I am very concerned about the effects of the outpatient prospective payment system and the severe cuts Maine providers will experience under this reimbursement system. By HCFA's own admission in the May 7 published rule, rural hospitals will take the biggest hit in reimbursements from the outpatient PPS. The total reduction in the first year for all institutions will be \$900 million, or a 5.7 percent average reduction per facility. I hope we consider placing a ceiling on the level of cut any hospital would face to their outpatient reimbursements.

Skilled nursing facilities are under particular burdens under the BBA as well. The prospective payment system is reducing payments by 20 percent. Rural facilities, especially, do not have the operating margins to absorb such a drastic cut. There are no accounting methods to increase payments for medically complex cases. On a related front, many providers believe the \$1,500 annual cap on therapy services is arbitrary and very hurtful for seniors. Many of these seniors have multiple therapy needs which can run out in a matter of months under this tight cap.

Changes in reimbursement for Graduate Medical Education unintentionally hurt family practice training in districts such as my own. I hope that this body reviews the technical corrections to GME reimbursements contained in my bill, H.R. 1222, which addressed this issue. These corrections are especially important for rural communities, where there are still shortages of family practice physicians.

Finally, I hope we consider as part of BBA corrective legislation the incorporation of provisions of H.R. 1344, the Triple-A Rural Health Improvement Act, developed by the Rural Health Care Coalition of the House. This bill is designed to address further the need for health care access for seniors in rural areas.

We must take the initiative to attack the problem of inadequate provider reimbursements now. I urge my colleagues to support the restoration of some of the most-harmful BBA cuts.

CELEBRATING THE HARRY AND
ROSE SAMSON FAMILY RE-
SOURCE CENTER

HON. THOMAS M. BARRETT

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 13, 1999

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to share with my colleagues a few words of congratulations to the Neighborhood House of Milwaukee on the dedication of its Harry and Rose Samson Family Resource Center, as well as my sincere appreciation for the generosity of Harry Samson.

Neighborhood House has a long and rich history of service to children and families in my hometown of Milwaukee, WI. Its program services are delivered in a community setting and are tailored to meet the diverse needs of neighborhood residents. The goal has always been to build "Healthy Families in a Strong Community," and Neighborhood House has never forgotten that the one implies the other.

I have respected Harry Samson for years, and I have the deepest regard and admiration for his commitment to improving the lives of others in our community. Harry and his late wife, Rose have led by example, giving generously of their financial resources, their time and their creative energy to support the Children's Outing Association, Congregation Shalom, the Next Door Foundation, the Jewish Community Center, and other worthy organizations.

Today in Milwaukee, Harry Samson's many friends and admirers will join Neighborhood house leadership and staff and neighborhood residents in celebrating Harry's latest gift to Milwaukee: the Harry and Rose Samson Family Resource Center. The Center will be home to a new and expanded program of services at Neighborhood House. These include support groups to help parents and other childcare givers, employment and work search resources and workshops, a clothing exchange to help families meet the clothing needs of growing children, a play area that will serve both parents and area in-home child care providers, and a health and wellness program