

H.R. 5621 MEDICAID
DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE (DSH)

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2000

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, on November 1, 2000 I introduced H.R. 5621, the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) Fairness Act of 2000. This legislation is identical to a bill which was introduced last month by the senior Senator from Illinois, with the full support of the Administration.

In 1997, Congress enacted the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) of 1997 (P.L. 105-33). The stated intent of the legislation was to slow the rate of growth in the Medicare program. Unfortunately, the reductions enacted through the BBA went much deeper than expected. As a result, the net and cumulative effects of the Act have severely reduced Medicare reimbursements to hospitals and health care service providers.

I opposed the Balanced Budget Act when it was debated by the House of Representatives in 1997. I believed that it was a bad policy then, and believe that it is a bad policy now.

The BBA reductions have been particularly severe on hospitals in Illinois. In my district, which encompasses the south and west sides of the city of Chicago, there are eleven major hospital facilities which have been devastated by BBA reductions. Multiply the losses across the state, and the impact on services is staggering. In the First Session of the current Congress, I introduced the Health Care Preservation and Accessibility Act of 1999, H.R. 3145, to provide relief to hospitals, community health centers, and skilled nursing facilities harmed by the excessive reductions of the Balanced Budget Act. Although my legislation was not enacted, the intent of many of its provisions were included in the Medicare Balanced Budget Refinement Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-113). That legislation helped relieve some of the financial strain placed on hospitals and health care providers. However, while hospitals and health care providers still struggle under the economic pressures imposed by the BBA reductions, a new series of proposed reductions threaten financial solvency.

In May of this year, the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) issued a notice to state Medicaid directors advising of its intent to revise the Medicaid funding formula known as Intergovernmental Transfers (IGT). This proposed rule would slash an additional \$375 million a year in Medicaid funding for Illinois—a state in which the healthcare system is already devastated by the effects of the Balanced Budget Act—and further endanger critical health services for children, senior citizens and the poor.

Both the state of Illinois and Cook County have diligently and constructively used the IGT funding to enhance the health care system, especially for low-income, uninsured and under insured Chicagoans, over the last 10 years. Although under the Health Care Financing Administration's Notice of Proposed Rule-making, the IGT program changes would be phased-in over a 5 year period, the proposed change would severely cripple the State's abil-

ity to provide needed health care services to Illinois citizens.

The legislation, which I have introduced with my colleague in the Senate, is designed to increase the Medicaid Disproportionate Share payments to all states and encourage states to use the DSH program as it was intended—to fund uncompensated health care. By increasing the Medicaid DSH payments, we are acknowledging the burden placed on hospitals that treat a large number of Medicaid and uninsured patients by the Balanced Budget Act and the proposed HCFA regulations.

Enactment of H.R. 5621 would allow Illinois, and all of the states, to continue to make inroads towards ensuring that an extensive safety net of hospitals and health care providers exist to provide care to the most vulnerable groups of society.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support H.R. 5621, and if this Congress fails to act on this legislation, I hope my colleagues will join me in making it a priority in the 107th Congress.

HONORING BERT HAGGERTY

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2000

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the hard work, dedication, and stewardship Bert Haggerty has given Long Islanders, New Yorkers, and Americans as the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Long Island Branch Office Manager.

Bert Haggerty grew up in Woodside, NY, graduated from St. Ann's Academy and earned a bachelor of business administration degree from St. John's University. He first worked for Touche Niven and then Olivetti Corporation where he enjoyed a successful 30-year career.

Afterward, he joined the U.S. Government in 1984 as district director of the Small Business Administration and became Assistant to the Regional Administrator for New York's regional office. In 1994, he was appointed manager of the SBA's Long Island office and under his stewardship has become a driving force in Long Island's economic scene.

Throughout his tenure as manager, he tripled the number of loans to Long Island's small businesses and significantly increased the amount of capital available to nearly \$1 billion.

Bert Haggerty will be missed by the Long Island community. I wish him and his family a fruitful and enjoyable retirement.

**IN HONOR OF JULES J.
BONAVOLONTA**

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2000

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of Jules J. Bonavolonta, this year's recipient of the North Ward Center's Monsignor Geno Baroni Award.

The North Ward Center provides educational, cultural, and social programs to improve the quality of life for thousands of Essex County residents. Each year, the Center pays tribute to the life of the late Monsignor Baroni, a man whose dedication to the less fortunate was an integral force behind the Center's development and success. The Center honors the Monsignor by recognizing a community leader, who best exemplifies the life, spirit, and commitment of this inspirational man.

Mr. Bonavolonta was chosen as the honoree this year based on his service to the country in the military, his contributions to the fight against crime, and his rise to success in the business world.

A native of Newark, New Jersey, Mr. Bonavolonta grew up in the Essex County Parish of Sacred Heart Cathedral. He is the son of Italian immigrant Ralph Bonavolonta and American-born Mary Bonavolonta. He attended St. Benedict's Prep and received his Bachelor's and his Master's Degree in Public Administration from Seton Hall University in 1975. During more than six years of service as a Green Beret in the U.S. Special Forces during the Vietnam War, Mr. Bonavolonta returned to the U.S. a highly decorated veteran. He was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star with "V" for Valor (1st Oak Leaf Cluster), Purple Heart, Air Medal (1st Oak Leaf Cluster), and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

Upon Mr. Bonavolonta's return, he began his 23-year career of exceptional and dedicated service to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In this capacity, he spearheaded the efforts to combat organized crime in this country. As Chief of the Organized Crime and Narcotics Division of the FBI's New York City Office, he was instrumental in securing the indictments and convictions that made the 1980's the FBI's most successful decade in the battle against organized crime.

Mr. Bonavolonta now serves as Vice Chairman of MBNA America Bank, N.A. He and his wife Linda have been married for 32 years. They have two children, Maria and Joseph.

For his many accomplishments and for his service to the country, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Mr. Bonavolonta, a very deserving recipient of this year's Monsignor Geno Baroni Award.

**FAREWELL SALUTE TO WILLIAM
"BILL" CLAY**

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2000

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, there are no new and original accolades that I can add to the many phrases of praise already accorded our retiring Member, WILLIAM "BILL" CLAY. When he arrived during the age of the afro haircut, BILL CLAY had a chest full of invisible medals from the Movement. He helped to guide the years of maximum Congressional Black Caucus solidarity, the time of CLAY, Dellums, CONYERS, Stokes and RANGEL. Those were the days when CBC Members were wise enough not to scramble single handedly for their committee assignment deals. In unison, the Black