

The President's Radio Address *October 26, 2002*

America's health care system has advantages no other nation can match but also challenges we cannot ignore. The quality of American medicine is excellent. Yet too many Americans live in communities lacking good clinics and basic health care. Others are forced to wait for new medical devices that are delayed in an overburdened approval process. And the high cost of prescription drugs is placing a heavy financial burden on many Americans, especially our seniors.

This week, we are taking steps to address all of these problems. Today I have signed legislation that will expand the number of community health centers across the country. Community health centers are America's health care safety net, providing prenatal care, checkups, and preventative treatments to anyone who walks in the door. They serve more than a million people, mainly in remote areas or in inner-city neighborhoods, places where too many people do not have the access to the quality health care they deserve.

I have set a goal of creating 1,200 new and expanded community health centers by the year 2006. The bill I signed today will help my administration achieve this goal. If Congress funds my budget request for these important health centers, we can help an additional 1 million Americans get health care in 2003 and 4 million more by 2006.

Also today I'm signing legislation that provides faster access to safe and effective medical devices. Each year, American companies are creating new technologies to save and improve lives, technologies like coronary stents and increasingly sophisticated pacemakers, which have helped reduce the death rate from heart disease by 35 percent since 1980.

Medical devices are often very complex and require careful testing before they're

approved by the Food and Drug Administration. But the FDA is overwhelmed by the volume of new technologies, making delays more frequent and undermining the quality of device reviews. Under the new law, we're going to speed up and improve the approval process. Companies that manufacture medical devices will be required to pay a reasonable fee to the FDA, so the FDA can afford more expert staff to conduct thorough reviews within reasonable time limits. The entire Nation will benefit from a faster approval of lifesaving innovations.

Earlier this week, I also announced action to bring lower cost generic drugs to market more quickly. Right now, some brand-name drug companies are using legal maneuvers to delay the approval of generic drugs, sometimes for years. We're setting new limits on those delays. By reducing the public's wait for quality generic drugs, we will reduce the cost of prescriptions in this country by more than \$3 billion each year. These savings will help employer health plans, State Medicaid programs, and seniors who buy medicines on their own.

On health care reform, we still have much work ahead of us. I applaud the House of Representatives for passing a prescription drug benefit for seniors and for its efforts to fix the Nation's badly broken medical liability system, which is driving up the cost of medicine and driving good doctors out of the profession. I'm disappointed that the Senate has failed to act on these important reforms.

With these reforms and the actions we have taken this week, we will bring the benefits of our health care system into the lives of more Americans. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:35 p.m. on October 25 at the Bush Ranch in

Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 25 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press

Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address. S. 1533, the Health Care Safety Net Amendments of 2002, approved October 26, was assigned Public Law 107-251.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Vicente Fox of Mexico and an Exchange With Reporters in Los Cabos, Mexico October 26, 2002

[*President Fox made opening remarks in Spanish, and no translation was provided.*]

President Bush. Vicente, thank you for inviting us here. This is a very beautiful part of the world, and we're so honored you're hosting this convention.

We did have a very good discussion, but I'm not surprised. After all, we're close friends. We discussed trade. We discussed commerce. We did discuss migration. Ever since I have been the President and Vicente has been the President, we have had a mutual desire to deal with the migration issue in a way that recognizes reality and in a way that treats the Mexican citizens who are in the United States with respect. And we will continue to work on this issue.

And we did talk about world peace and Iraq. Mexico is a member of the Security Council. We discussed how to keep the world peaceful, how to hold people to account, how to make sure the United Nations is effective. And I appreciate so very much the President and the Foreign Minister's desire to consult closely with the United States as we move forward to making the world more peaceful.

So we're—it's an honor to be here. It's going to be a very important conference, being held in a beautiful spot and hosted by a good friend, Mr. President.

We'll take a couple of questions.

Immigration

Q. President Bush, we know that—we understand President Fox was going to talk to you about the impact that your subsidies would eventually have on Mexican illegal migration to the U.S. Did you have an answer for him?

President Bush. Ask the question again—agricultural subsidies?

Q. Migration—

President Bush. Oh, yes. Well, here's the answer. The answer is, the long-term answer for the migration issue is to work a way that encourages commerce on both sides of the border, so people can find jobs here in Mexico, for starters. That's the long-term solution.

And the short-term solution, we've got to recognize that wage differentials are going to cause people to want to come to the United States. And when they come to the United States, we've got to work to make sure they're treated with respect. And the issue is, how do we recognize the reality of two societies with a wage differential the way they are? Here on the border, the wage differential is narrowing—or on the border, wage differential is narrowing, so the migration pressure tends to come from interior of Mexico and the south of Mexico. And one of the things that the President and I have discussed in the past is, how best to develop industry together in the midst of Mexico, in the south of Mexico, so that people are more likely to find work at home.