

lem in half. Now, we don't want our young people left alone on street corners when they can be in school or at home. And we have to have ways that help our educators, our parents, our religious and community leaders to try to save these kids.

This antigang and youth violence strategy is based on what we know works. It is really a national framework to give other communities the chance to get the resources to do what you're trying to do in Boston. That is all it is. Tough when you should be tough; smart when you should be smart; compassionate when you should be compassionate; using everybody, building partnerships, letting everybody play a role; requiring communities to take responsibility for their own streets and their own kids and then giving you the outside support you need. That is all this bill does.

It is the critical next step in our fight to have a safe America and to give our children a safe childhood. And I ask you here in Massachusetts to send a clear message. We know if this can be done in Boston, it can be done in every community, in every neighborhood of every size in the United States, and we ask the United States Congress to do what you've done here in Massachusetts, cross all party lines, throw politics away, throw the speeches in the trash can, join hands. Let's do what works and make America the safe place it has to be.

Let me just make one other point to you. The citizens of this country have got to do their part—every citizen. And one of the things that I want to announce today that I'm very proud of, that I think will help make all of you be better citizens and to support community policing, which is clearly the single most decisive element in bringing the crime rate, the neighborhood policing system.

Not very long ago I was made aware of a problem that, like a lot of problems ordinary people have but Presidents don't know about because our lives are so isolated, I learned that a lot of the 911 numbers were breaking down because 911 was being clogged up not only by genuine emergencies but by other legitimate calls that weren't really emergencies. And so I asked the Federal Communications Commission to set up a na-

tional community policing number for non-emergencies so that 911 calls would always go through when there was a matter of life and death, but all the other calls could be handled as well. This morning, the FCC announced that they are designating and setting aside the numbers 311 as a national non-emergency community policing number. And I believe it will help you.

So to all of you out here who are just citizens I say, use both numbers and talk to your neighbors about using them in the right way. Be a part of a neighborhood watch. Support these community police officers, these probation officers, and do what you can to play your part. We'll do our part. You have to do your part.

If this country is going to be the country it ought to be in the 21st century, we can't have any more reports like the one that came out of the Center for Disease Control a few days ago saying that 75 percent of all the kids murdered in the industrial world are killed in the United States. What we've got to do is to create the record of the last year and a half in Boston for the United States. If you give our kids back their lives and their future, they will make America the world's greatest country in the 21st century.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:22 p.m. at the Clark Athletic Center. In his remarks, he referred to William Bulger, president, Sherry H. Penney, chancellor, of the university; and Gov. William Weld and Attorney General L. Scott Harshbarger of Massachusetts. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on the Death of Deng Xiaoping

February 19, 1997

I was saddened today to learn of the death of Deng Xiaoping, China's senior statesman. Over the past two decades, Mr. Deng was an extraordinary figure on the world stage and the driving force behind China's decision to normalize relations with the United States. His historic visit to our country in 1979 laid the foundation for the rapid expansion of re-

lations and cooperation between China and the United States.

Mr. Deng's long life spanned a century of turmoil, tribulation, and remarkable change in China. He spurred China's historic economic reform program, which greatly improved living standards in China and modernized much of the nation.

China today plays an important role in world affairs in no small part because of Mr. Deng's decision to open his country to the outside world. The continued emergence of China as a great power that is stable politically and open economically, that respects human rights and the rule of law, and that becomes a full partner in building a secure international order, is profoundly in America's interest and in the world's interest.

I want to convey my personal condolences to China's President Jiang Zemin, to Mr. Deng's widow, Zhuo Lin, and to the Chinese people.

Remarks on Medicaid Patient Protection and an Exchange With Reporters

February 20, 1997

The President. Thank you. I was just sitting here thinking that in the spirit of full disclosure the Vice President and Secretary Shalala may have a particular vested interest in health care issues—that they both just got back from South Africa and when they got back he got on a plane and went to Los Angeles to speak to the AFL-CIO convention; he got back at 4 o'clock this morning. And she got on a plane and went to New York with me to a welfare reform event. And I don't see how either one of them are still standing up. [*Laughter*] But they probably have a strong interest in what happened here today.

Let me thank, if I might, first of all, all the Members of Congress who are here from both parties for their leadership on this issue; and Bruce Vladeck and Bruce Fried for what they have done; and the representatives of the groups over here to my right for being here and for supporting our endeavors.

Today I'm pleased to announce that we're taking steps to see that Medicaid beneficiaries continue to get access to the fullest

quality health care. In recent years, the medical community and the insurance industry have joined to reform and improve American health care, working with us, and much of this progress has come through managed care, which emphasizes prevention, provides better care, and controls costs at the same time, when the plans are the best and the right kind of managed care plans.

On the whole, the growth of managed care has been a good thing for our country. But we also know, we've seen enough to know that we have to make absolutely sure that this rapid transformation does not lead to a decline in the quality of health care.

That's why I've been concerned about these so-called gag rules that some HMO's and other health care plans have, rules that restrict the ability of health care professionals to administer proper medical care, that prevent doctors and nurses from telling patients about alternate and sometimes more expensive care that are not covered by the plans that they're in. This is unacceptable. Patients in HMO's and other health plans should know that their doctors will give them the very best information, the very most complete information, the widest possible range of information when it comes to their treatment. And there shouldn't be a shadow of doubt about this.

In December, as Secretary Shalala just said, we took action to give Medicare beneficiaries the right to know about their treatment options. Today we take the next step, acting to protect 13 million Medicaid beneficiaries, children, the disabled, elderly Americans. I'm directing Secretary Shalala to inform all State Medicaid directors that it's illegal for health care plans to prohibit doctors from discussing any treatment options with their patients. Families facing illness simply should not have to worry that the doctor they trust does not have the freedom to tell them what they need to know. Patients have the fundamental right to know they are getting the best medical treatment, not simply the cheapest.

And this must be only the beginning. We can act today to protect Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries because they are Federal programs and because Government is the largest purchaser of managed care in our Na-