

provide a higher quality of care to patients. Moreover, the Food and Drug Administration is working to implement new reporting systems that allow for a rapid response to medical errors causing patient injury. However, despite all the progress that has been made, it is clear that more must be done.

Recent advances in technology and information systems can help eliminate dangerous medical errors, lower costs by improving communications between doctors, eliminate redundant tests and procedures, and build automatic safeguards against harmful drug interactions and other adverse side effects into the treatment process. Despite this fact, very few public and private health plans, hospitals, and employers appropriately use these new techniques.

Therefore, I hereby direct the Quality Interagency Coordination Task Force, to report to me a set of recommendations on specific actions to improve health care outcomes and prevent medical errors in both the public and private sectors in a manner that is consistent with the strong privacy protections we have proposed. This report shall:

- Identify prevalent threats to patient safety and medical errors that can be prevented through the use of decision support systems, such as patient monitoring and reminder systems;
- Evaluate the feasibility and advisability of the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine's Quality of Health Care in America Committee on patient safety;
- Identify additional strategies to reduce medical errors and ensure patient safety in Federal health care programs;
- Evaluate the extent to which medical errors are caused by misuse of medications and medical devices and consider steps to strengthen the Food and Drug Administration's surveillance and response system to reduce their incidence; and
- Identify opportunities for the Federal Government to take specific action to improve patient safety and health care quality nationwide through collaboration with the private sector, including the National Forum for Health Care Quality Measurement and Reporting.

I direct the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Labor to serve as the coordinating agencies to assist in the development and integration of recommendations and to report back to me within 60 days. The recommended actions should lay the foundation for a national system that prevents adverse medical events before they occur.

William J. Clinton

Proclamation 7259—National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, 1999

December 7, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Early on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, the 130 vessels of the U.S. Pacific Fleet lay quiet and serene in Pearl Harbor. Americans sailors were preparing to raise colors, unaware that the worst naval disaster in American history was about to unfold. As the first wave of Japanese planes dropped torpedo bombs on the fleet, all eight battleships along with three destroyers and three light cruisers were hit. Two hours after the first Japanese bomber hit its target, 21 ships of the U.S. Pacific Fleet lay sunk or badly damaged. U.S. aircraft losses included 188 planes destroyed and another 159 damaged. Before the bombing was over, some 3,500 Americans had been killed or injured. The sinking of the battleship USS ARIZONA remains the most recognized symbol of that tragic day. Of the ARIZONA's crew, 1,177 were killed, nearly half of all the deaths suffered at Pearl Harbor.

Time has not dimmed our memory of the ferocity of that attack 58 years ago or the pain of the losses we suffered. The assault brought shock and grief not only to the families and loved ones of those who were injured or lost their lives, but also to our entire country.

The attack on Pearl Harbor shook our Nation but strengthened our resolve. Two days later, in a Fireside Chat, President Roosevelt affirmed that resolve in explaining America's sudden thrust into World War II: "We don't

like it—we didn't want to get in it—but we are in it and we're going to fight it with everything we've got. We are going to win the war and we are going to win the peace that follows." Just as the American forces at Pearl Harbor responded to the attack with great courage, the United States responded with determination that this assault would not keep us from victory over the Axis powers. Union leaders agreed not to strike for the duration of the war as President Roosevelt garnered the support of our working men and women to increase war production and build our "Arsenal of Democracy." Millions of American patriots joined the Armed Forces, willing to serve and sacrifice in the cause of freedom.

Rising from the destruction at Pearl Harbor, all but three of the ships sunk there were repaired and put back into service. Less than 4 years later, the Pacific Fleet sailed victoriously into Tokyo Bay. Today, the Battleship Missouri Memorial is docked on Pearl Harbor's Battleship Row, a fitting tribute to our triumph in World War II. It was Pearl Harbor that cemented the United States resolve to win the war, and it was aboard the "Mighty Mo" that the Japanese signed surrender documents in 1945, and peace in the Pacific was finally realized.

Pearl Harbor is both a reminder of what can happen when we are unprepared and a call for continuing vigilance in defense of our Nation. The world has changed greatly since that dark day more than half a century ago, but our need to remain engaged is more crucial than ever. We must never forget the lessons of Pearl Harbor or the courage, determination, and indomitable spirit of that generation of Americans who recovered from a devastating defeat to win the ultimate victory for freedom, democracy, and peace.

The Congress, by Public Law 103-308, has designated December 7, 1999, as "National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 7, 1999, as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. I urge all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities in honor of the Americans who served at Pearl Harbor. I also ask all Federal depart-

ments and agencies, organizations, and individuals to fly the flag of the United States at half-staff on this day in honor of those Americans who died as a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 8, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 9.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Tim Johnson

December 7, 1999

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, I'm honored to be here. I was trying to think of some one thing I could say that would illustrate the esteem in which I hold Tim Johnson and Barbara, and how valuable they are to the United States Senate. And I think that the best example is that Pat Moynihan and I are here, and we're not running for anything. *[Laughter]* We're here because we like and admire Tim Johnson, and we think he should be reelected, and we appreciate what he's done.

I enjoyed meeting all of you when you went through the line and we had a chance to visit. A lot of you expressed various concerns, which I appreciate. I want to thank Vic Fazio and Jim Slattery for coming. They served in the House with Tim; they were there when I became President. And I want to thank all of you for being here.

I just want to say a couple of serious words in this holiday season. First, our country is greatly blessed. We have been very fortunate. Last week I announced that we went over 20 million jobs since January of 1993, the most rapid job growth we've ever had and the longest peacetime economic expansion in our history.

It is now commonly agreed that the strength and the duration of this expansion