

which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

#### ABC CODES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the billing code system in the United States permits insurance reimbursement for health services and facilitates review of patient access and utilization of benefits.

Mr. Speaker, the way we determine health policy, evaluate health care services and codify those services for reimbursement impacts our health care system in dramatic ways. In health care reimbursement, if there is no code for the product, it will not get reimbursed.

Many Americans use complementary and alternative health care procedures, including nursing, chiropractic, acupuncture, naturopathic medicine, nutritional and botanical therapies. Too often there is no insurance reimbursement or inadequate reimbursement for these health-promoting services. And one reason is because there is no standardized tool to code these services and products. As a consequence, those who can afford it pay out of pocket and those who cannot are denied access.

Right now the Current Procedure Terminology code, or CPT codes as it is called, is the only approved coding standard available for insurance reimbursement. It is geared strictly to services provided by physicians and does not have the capability to represent services by other licensed providers including nurses. The CPT codes cover only about a quarter of all health care services used by Americans, leaving out three quarters of all health care products and services used to stay healthy and prevent disease. This creates critical gaps in knowledge about the health care marketplace.

On January 16, Health and Human Services Secretary Thompson authorized a pilot test of a new coding practice in accordance with the provisions and regulations governing the Health Insurance Portability Act that facilitates electronic transactions. These new codes supplement CPT codes and support tracking, measurement and analysis of the economic and health outcomes of complementary and alternative medicine, nursing and other forms of integrated health care. We have the opportunity as a result of this action to make major strides in addressing pressing issues in health care, accessibility, quality and cost management.

Mr. Speaker, this new technology is a set of alphabetic codes, called ABC codes, that function in a manner simi-

lar to the bar codes in the retail industry. This innovative new technology can provide us as health policy-makers with a more complete and accurate picture of the way U.S. health care is managed, financed, and delivered in terms of what works and what does not.

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Head-to-head comparisons of conventional, complementary and alternative care are necessary to identify and advance the most health-promoting and cost-effective health care practices.

Mr. Speaker, I learned about the ABC codes because they address many health care services that have been largely ignored and undervalued and because studies show it is much more cost-effective to prevent disease than to treat it after it has developed.

The developers of ABC codes have designed ABC codes to fit into existing health care data fields, software application and information systems. So the cost and burden of implementation is small, but the benefits are large, and ABC codes help payers identify when reimbursement is justified as it relates to whether the provider is licensed under State law.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to pay close attention to this pilot program to learn of the value of integrating complementary health care and assisting us in developing a model of care that is more cost-effective and health promoting.

#### SENATE CONFIRMATION OF MIGUEL ESTRADA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to the majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY). I think his comments are especially pertinent this evening in consideration of the debate that is going on in this Capitol. So I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. DELAY. I greatly appreciate the gentleman giving me some of his time. The gentleman is on this floor on a very regular basis making some very important remarks about very important issues, and he will continue that, but the gentleman is right, Mr. Speaker.

Tonight is a very, very important night. There is a debate going on in this town that is highly important to the future of this country. The debate is so important that I hope the American people are tuning in and understand what is going on in this country.

Because, Mr. Speaker, there is a gentleman that has been nominated to serve on the D.C. Court of Appeals bench. The gentleman's name is Miguel Estrada. Miguel Estrada is exactly the type of highly qualified lawyer that America needs on the bench in this country. His story also mirrors Amer-

ica's best heritage of individual achievement and the blessings available to those who choose to hitch their futures to our republic. He represents the best tradition of hard work, perseverance, dedication and integrity. He built a strong record of academic excellence in leading universities.

The left often opposes conservative judicial nominees on the basis of an unfavorable rating from the American Bar Association, but in this case, Mr. Speaker, even the ABA recognizes that Miguel Estrada is well qualified. In fact, Al Gore's close legal adviser and former chief of staff Ron Klain had this to say about Estrada: Miguel is a person of outstanding character, tremendous intellect and with a deep commitment to the faithful application of precedent. The challenges that he has overcome in his life have made him genuinely compassionate, genuinely concerned for others and genuinely devoted to helping those in need.

Former President Bill Clinton's Solicitor General Seth Waxman said, During the time Mr. Estrada and I worked together, he was a model of professionalism and competence. In no way did I ever discern that the recommendations Mr. Estrada made or the analyses he propounded were colored in any way by his personal views or indeed that they reflected any consideration other than the long-term interests of the United States. I have great respect both for Mr. Estrada's intellect and for his integrity.

There, Mr. Speaker, we have it. Objective observers from the other side of the aisle recognize that Miguel Estrada is a highly qualified and intellectually gifted legal superstar who would immediately raise the standard of the bench on his first day.

There is no substantive basis for opposing his candidacy beyond the vicious and intellectually dishonest tenets of an all-consuming leftist ideology that is driven entirely by an appetite to destroy anyone standing beyond its control.

The left is inflamed by any prospective judicial candidate with the courage to oppose their unrelenting, small-minded, intolerant hostility to the traditional foundations of American life: faith in God, reverence for tradition, respect for the true rule of law and the recognition that we are all ultimately accountable for our actions.

That last point in particular, Mr. Speaker, summons the deepest venom and bile from the left. They attempted over the four decades beginning in the 1960s to put forth a vast and sordid swindle upon the American people. The left claim that men and women could take any action, that they could ignore our most sacred and sacrosanct traditions, that in service of convenience they could callously destroy and step forward without consequences.

Now we know better. We know that the left's malevolent campaign to undermine the notion of truth itself comes at a frightful price. Their malignant hold over the intellectual life of