

Maxine Ringle for their contributions to Fairfax County, Virginia.

In the mid-1960's and 1970's, much of the Fairfax Station and Clifton areas of the Occoquan Watershed were zoned by Fairfax County for one-acre residential lots. During this time, there was little local public consciousness of the benefits of maintaining the rural nature of the land in order to protect the quality of the drinking water supply from the Occoquan Reservoir.

John and Maxine Ringle owned a substantial portion of the land in Fairfax Station and Clifton and were free to direct the division of that land into one-acre lots. Developing this land would have led to extensive construction, a network of new roads, deforesting the wooded area, and irrevocably destroying the rural nature of this area of Fairfax County.

The Ringles recognized the unique nature of this extensive undeveloped area and envisioned it as a limited-development area where its natural beauty could be preserved. Owners could enjoy the amenities of a rural life while living only a few minutes from the urban offerings of Fairfax County, Virginia and the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area. John and Maxine had the foresight to protect this rural area by creating eleven separate developments with five-acre lots and establish binding covenants to preserve this lot size.

In 1982, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, downzoned 41,000 acres in the Fairfax Station and Clifton areas to legally establish a natural protective buffer area in the watershed of the Occoquan Reservoir, currently the source of water for over a million Northern Virginia residents. Without the vision and actions of John and Maxine Ringle in the preceding decades, Fairfax County would not have been able to enact this downzoning which continues to protect and preserve the Occoquan Watershed and Reservoir for Northern Virginia residents.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors proclaimed July 26, 2004, as John D. Ringle and T. Maxine Ringle Day. This honor truly is well deserved.

Mr. Speaker, the Ringle's visionary and environmentally sound approach to the development of the Occoquan Watershed enabled Fairfax County to ultimately preserve the Occoquan Watershed and Reservoir for the benefit of all residents. I ask that my colleagues join me in commending John and Maxine Ringle.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL
HOMECARE AND HOSPICE MONTH

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize November as National Homecare and Hospice Month. National Homecare and Hospice Month is an opportunity to recognize the importance of homecare as an essential component of healthcare in the United States. While most of us formally recognize homecare and Hospice one month out of the year, individuals and families across our Nation that utilize these services realize the importance of homecare and Hospice each and every day.

Homecare provides a family-friendly, clinically proven way of providing quality healthcare for millions of Americans and homecare has become an increasingly important part of our health care system. The highly skilled services that these caregivers provide have enabled millions of our most frail, older and disabled citizens to avoid hospitals and nursing homes and stay just where they want to be—in the comfort and security of their own homes.

In a rural district, such as Oregon's Second Congressional District, which encompasses over 70,000 square miles, including two counties with no physicians, accessing healthcare service can be challenging. There are 23 homecare agencies serving the 20 counties of Oregon's Second Congressional District. In some parts of Oregon, homecare professionals are the only source of healthcare services. The tremendous dedication and compassion of these professionals truly deserves the recognition of November being named National Homecare and Hospice Month. The care they provide is truly invaluable and allowing individuals to remain in their homes and close to loved ones is priceless.

Because homecare is so crucial to rural areas, I introduced the Medicare Rural Home Health Services Improvement Act (HR 4902). This bill would ensure that homecare providers that serve patients in rural areas will continue to receive a 5 percent add-on payment through 2007. This measure recognizes that the delivery of homecare services in rural areas is more costly because of the extra travel time required to cover long distances between patients. Longer travel times mean that rural caregivers have to devote more time to each patient and are also unable to make as many visits in a day as their urban counterparts. If the extra rural payment is not extended, agencies may be forced to turn away rural patients with the greatest care needs.

Nationwide, homecare represents a family value and a value for families. It's about quality healthcare and quality of life for at least 8 million households across the United States.

According to reports issued by the Medicare Payment Advisory Committee and other independent observers:

Homecare for selected conditions can shorten inpatient hospital stays.

Homecare can reduce the overall costs of care without compromising outcomes.

Homecare can improve clinical outcomes including mortality. This improvement can be striking in degree.

Homecare can improve functional independence and reduce the risk of institutional placement.

For Medicare beneficiaries with selected conditions, formal homecare is the most cost effective strategy for achieving functional improvement compared to in-patient rehabilitation, nursing-home-based rehabilitation, and discharge to home without formal homecare services.

Homecare is expected to grow in the years ahead because of several large-scale trends:

The American population is rapidly aging. The 85—and-older group is the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population.

In the near future, advances in technology will allow virtually every service short of surgery to be delivered at home.

Homecare does not require brick-and-mortar investments since it's provided at home.

Homecare is a critical component of our healthcare delivery system; so today I join homecare patients and caregivers throughout the United States in celebrating National Homecare and Hospice Month.

RECOGNIZING MR. JOE DAMORE
FOR HIS SERVICE TO SPARROW
HOSPITAL IN LANSING, MI

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Joe Damore for his outstanding leadership and commitment to improving healthcare as the President and CEO of Sparrow Hospital and Health Systems in Lansing, Michigan. Mr. Damore has led the Sparrow Health System to its success as one of the top healthcare providers in the greater Lansing area. Since his arrival in 1990, the Sparrow Health System has become mid-Michigan's first and only Level 1 Trauma Center, and increased its medical staff from 500 to 850 physicians. Under the direction of Mr. Damore, the Sparrow Health System has expanded its residency programs with Michigan State University, allowing young health professionals to gain the valuable experience needed for the future, while providing quality healthcare to mid-Michigan residents.

The Sparrow Health System has a mission to provide quality, compassionate and affordable healthcare to the residents of mid-Michigan. In the past fourteen years of dedicated service, Mr. Damore has guided the Sparrow Health System to exceed this mission with expanded facilities and increased inpatient admissions from 18,000 to 29,000 per year. It is because of his exceptional leadership and success that we offer Mr. Damore a fond farewell as he has been offered a position as the President and CEO of Mission Health and Hospitals in Asheville, North Carolina. Mr. Damore will certainly be an asset to the Asheville healthcare community.

Mr. Speaker, during his tenure at the Sparrow Health System Mr. Damore has brought affordable and superior healthcare to the residents of mid-Michigan. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Joe Damore for his extraordinary commitment and dedication to provide top quality health services, and to wish him success in all of his future endeavors.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO SHIRLEY
BOWEN

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Shirley Bowen as she embarks on a well-deserved retirement from Colorado Mountain College. Shirley has served the college for almost four decades and her leadership has made a significant difference in the development of Colorado state policy, testing procedure, and state-wide curriculum. It is my pleasure to congratulate Shirley before this