

The NUNES Report

Rule change helps health centers

Inside this issue:

Seeking solutions for
K Street 2

Nunes helps keep
Internet tax-free 2

Nunes presses issues
that matter 4

Stemming from legislation introduced by Rep. Devin Nunes, federal health officials announced a rule change that gives hospitals more options in how they handle patients who enter the emergency room with non-urgent medical needs.

Federal law (Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, or EMTALA) requires hospital emergency rooms to treat everyone regardless of their ability to pay, a provision that often strains medical resources because of patients who seek help for non-urgent needs.

The rule change made by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will allow hospitals to screen patients entering their emergency room and divert those whose medical needs are not urgent to other health care services within the hospital or outside medical services.

Mr. Nunes sought this flexibility earlier this year with a bill he introduced as a result of a regional health care summit. His legislation was later folded into the national Medicare bill.

"I'm gratified the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recognize that our emergency rooms are in dire need of help," said Mr.



Rep. Nunes with Harry Foster the CEO of Family Healthcare based in Visalia and a number of friends and constituents

Nunes, who is a member of the Prescription Drug Action Team in the House. "This change in the regulations is a step in the right direction. It continues to ensure people will get the appropriate medical treatment regard-

less of their ability to pay, while at the same time giving health officials more flexibility in handling increasing numbers of patients."

The rule change goes into effect Nov. 10.

Quick Facts

In September, Rep. Nunes wrote to 1,034 constituents in response to their inquires. Year to date, Rep. Nunes has responded to 9,341 constituents via the U.S. Mail.

Nunes votes to keep Internet tax-free

Rep. Devin Nunes voted for a consumer-friendly, high-tech legislative plan that will extend the tax-free status of Internet e-commerce.

The Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act was approved in the House of Representatives by a unanimous vote.

"The Internet is opening doors for people that no one ever thought possible. We want to encourage

Americans to go online and continue exploring this powerful tool," said Mr. Nunes, a co-sponsor of the bill. "The House approved a plan that

strengthens this vital component of our growing economy."

"Those who do not have access to the Internet shouldn't have to face another barrier in the form of a tax to prevent them from getting onto the information superhighway. Removing the Internet tax helps eliminate this 'digital divide' and help countless Americans log on."

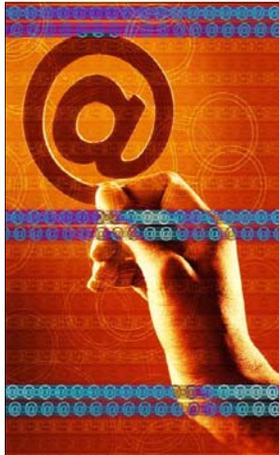
The Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act will:

Increase investment in new IT developments. Despite the economic slowdown, IT industries have

continued to expand investment. Keeping e-commerce tax-free will continue spurring this investment.

Accelerate e-commerce sales. In 2000, Internet sales totaled \$28 billion. By 2001, this number had climbed to over \$35 billion. In the third-quarter of 2002 alone, Internet sales reached more than \$10 billion. Slapping a tax on these sales will only inhibit future growth.

Encourage more Americans to go online. Internet access is more affordable without taxes. Keeping the Internet tax-free will encourage an increasingly diverse online population of Internet users.



Quick Facts

In September, Rep. Nunes helped 39 constituents overcome problems with government agencies. For the year, the Congressman has directly solved issues for 202 constituents and is currently assisting 354 others.

Nunes calls for emergency funds for K Street

Rep. Devin Nunes sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Commerce, seeking emergency assistance to deal with the K Street off-ramp closure.

Mr. Nunes laid out the situation in a letter to Assistant Secretary for Economic Development Dr. David Sampson.

"The purpose of this letter is to inform [the Economic Development Administration] EDA of the serious economic damage that will be associated with this ramp closure, unless mitigating work can be conducted as quickly as possible," he said in the letter. "Unfortunately, local government officials are unable to meet the financial burdens associated with addressing this problem and the State of California has expressed serious funding concerns."

Mr. Nunes hopes to secure an emergency economic development grant to help pay for costs associated with constructing an alternative route flowing into the city's industrial area.

"The majority of the city's industrial park is located in this area and easy access to SR 99 is vital to their long-term survival-- not to mention serious traffic safety concerns," said Mr. Nunes, a member of the House Committee on Agriculture.

"The ramp closure will likely have serious and nega-

tive consequences for the World Ag Expo, the largest farm equipment show in the world, which is held at the International Agri-Center. With the annual farm equipment show in February, the need to address both the short and long-term consequences of the K street ramp closure is urgent. People from throughout the world travel to the City of Tulare for this event and its importance to the local economy cannot be overstated."

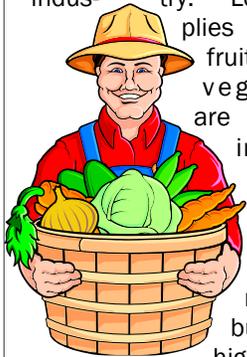


Nunes continues to push on important issues

Agriculture

Specialty Crops

Congressman Nunes recognizes the value of the United States specialty crop industry. Local supplies of fresh



fruits and vegetables are not only important to our nation's nutritional needs but are highly valuable economic commodities around the world. In an effort to increase consumer education and awareness, improve access to foreign markets, and improve food safety, Mr. Nunes became an original co-sponsor of the Specialty Crop Competitive-

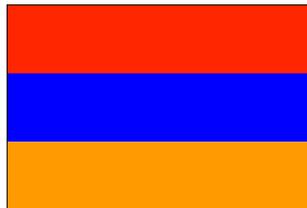
ness Act of 2003. The new legislation will provide additional financial resources to farmers, scientists and educators to address these key points.

Labor

In order to provide a more stable, secure, safe and legal American agriculture work force and food supply Congressman Nunes has cosponsored H.R. 3142, the Agricultural Jobs, Opportunity, Benefits, and Security Act (AgJOBS). This newly revised, historically bipartisan, farm worker reform legislation builds upon years of discussion and ideas between Congress, agricultural producers, farm worker advocates, Latinos and others. The AgJOBS bill would provide a two step solution to many of the problems involved with agricultural la-

bor. For the short term, on a one-time basis, experienced, trusted workers with a significant work history in American agriculture would be allowed to stay here legally and earn adjustment to legal status by working a set number of hours within a certain time frame. For the long term, the currently broken and cumbersome H-2A legal guest worker program would be overhauled and made more streamlined, practical and secure. Congressman Nunes believes that this bill is a balanced, practical, and achievable approach to resolving current problems and preventing a growing crisis that threatens American agriculture, workers, and consumers.

Armenia



In a continued effort to assist economic development in Armenia, Rep. Nunes sent a letter to the Foreign Operations Appropriation Committee Conferees urging them to include in the Committee Report on the FY2004 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill language supporting the development of a Central Diagnostic Laboratory in Armenia. This language was contained in the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill passed by the House of Representatives at the request of Rep. Nunes.

This language will assist Fresno based Armenian Technology Group, Inc. to establish and develop a Central Diagnostic Laboratory in the Caucasus region, to address the public safety - including health and food safety - needs of the region for the early detection of indigenous and transboundary zoonotic diseases - such as Anthrax, Mad-Cow, Foot & Mouth, Brucellosis, and related diseases.

Appropriations

The following is a list of Fiscal Year 2004 Appropriations requests made by Rep. Nunes which were included in the House of Representatives Appropriations bills (waiting on Senate action).

The following is a partial list:

Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury, Postal, and General Government

\$4 million to build a 31,500 square foot Bus Maintenance Facility in Visalia

\$20 million increase for the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) High Intensity Drug Traffic Area (HITDA) program - to include an increase in funding for the Central Valley HITDA

\$4 million for Fresno Area Express (FAX) to purchase clean fuel buses

Community Medical Centers - Funding made

Legislative work—cont.'d

available for the Community Medical Centers Intermodal facility in Fresno, California, shall be made available for the City of Fresno for the same project. The availability of such funds for obligation shall be extended through fiscal year 2004.

Business

Vehicle Repair

Under current law, vehicle manufacturers and others may unfairly restrict access to the information, parts, and tools necessary to accurately diagnose, repair, re-program or install automotive replacement parts. This forces consumers to use repair shops associated with the manufacturers and prevents independent, aftermarket competition for repair. Congressman Nunes co-sponsored H.R. 2735, "The Motor Vehicle Owners' Right to Repair Act," which will provide equity in the market by allowing consumers to choose independent repair shops for automotive work.

Defense

Healthcare

Under current law, a soldier discharged from the hospital is required to reimburse the military for the food expenses he or she incurs while under medical care. Congressman Nunes co-sponsored H.R. 2998, which will end this practice. Mr. Nunes believes that heroes who have been injured in defense of our freedom should not be billed for their food while recovering in a hospital.

Education

Minority Serving Institutions

Congressman Nunes helped introduce H.R. 3039, the Expanding Opportunities in Higher Education Act as an effort to increase access to post-secondary institutions for students of the San Joaquin Valley. This bill would expand opportunities in higher education for needy and non-traditional students, boost Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and other Minority Serving Institutions, and simplify the federal student aid process for all students and families throughout the nation.

Fire Fighting

The Forest Service has exhausted the fiscal year 2003 (FY03) fire suppression funds and has been forced, once again, into borrowing almost \$400 million

from other accounts. This includes fuel reduction accounts which would ironically reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire. Considering this position, Rep. Nunes, along with a number of his colleagues, sent a letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dennis Hastert and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi urging them to quickly move an emergency funding supplementing the wildfire suppression budget of the Forest Service. With fires burning around the West, FY03 wildfire suppression money exhausted, and the relevant agencies aggressively borrowing from other program areas to absorb wildland firefighting expenses, there is a desperate need for Congress to promptly move a wildfire funding supplemental. With wildland firefighting costs approaching \$13 million a day, this borrowing total will very likely increase by at least another \$200 million before mother nature brings an end to this fire season, bringing the borrowing total to in excess of \$600 million for the current fiscal year.

