

to: Paul, Theda, Helene, Mary Helen
from: Nance 6/15
re: nursing homes

STATEMENT BY PAUL TSONGAS IN REACTION TO THE GLOBE SPOTLIGHT TEAM REPORTS ON THE NURSING HOME INDUSTRY. STATEMENT REQUESTED BY GLOBE. PREPARED BY THEDA, HELENE AND NANCE:

THE RECENT SPOTLIGHT TEAM REPORTS ON NURSING HOMES BROUGHT TO THE SURFACE SEVERAL CONCERNS WE ALL HAVE HARBORED ABOUT NURSING HOMES. THE FEAR OF POOR CARE, THE ISOLATION OF THE PATIENT, AND THE RESIDUAL GUILT WE FEEL ABOUT HAVING TO RELY ON A NURSING HOME FOR OUR RELATIVES----- ALL LEAVE US UNWILLING TO FOCUS ON THE DISTURBING PROBLEMS OF THIS IMPORTANT INDUSTRY.

WHILE AN EVER INCREASING OLDER POPULATION MEANS THERE WILL BE A GROWING NEED FOR NURSING HOME CARE, IT ALSO CHALLENGES US TO RESPOND WITH ALTERNATIVES TO INSTITUTIONALIZATION. THE QUESTION WE ALL MUST FACE IS HOW TO PROVIDE QUALITY CARE? WHAT INCENTIVES CAN BE PROVIDED TO INCREASE COMPETITION WITHIN THE INDUSTRY YET ALLOW FOR AN ADEQUATE MARGIN OF PROFIT?

THE SPOTLIGHT TEAM IS TO BE COMMENDED FOR ITS PERSISTENCE IN BRINGING BEFORE THE PUBLIC USEFUL INFORMATION. MY RESPONSIBILITY AS WELL AS THE PUBLIC'S IS TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN RESOLVING THE MANY PROBLEMS PINPOINTED IN THE SPOTLIGHT SERIES. I AM HOPEFUL THAT ONE RESULT OF REDOUBLED EFFORTS WILL BE THE DEVELOPMENT OF PREVENTIVE MEASURES BY BOTH THE INDUSTRY AND THE REGULATORS TO ENSURE QUALITY CARE IN OUR NURSING HOMES.

note: Spotlight team wanted to know exactly what preventive measures we meant. I indicated that we have been considering, now that we have been functioning for a few months, additional areas in which we would like to make inroads (adding on to energy, cities, etc.) and that the whole approach to the care for the elderly was an area in which we intended to become more involved. I said that the timing of the Spotlight series only served to reinforce our feeling that more needs to be done in terms of action and leadership at the federal level. When we do (even if several months from now) take any initiatives in the area of nursing care for the elderly, Spotlight Team is interested in being notified.