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concerns with a multipronged attack on crime. The anti-terrorism legislation (now in a House Senate conference) cracks down on both domestic and international terrorism, including first ever authority for victims of terrorism to sue (in American courts) nations which harbor and aid terrorists, and the ability to attach the assets those nations have in the U.S. The bill also limits the currently unlimited appeals for convicted murderers, so they no longer can avoid the death penalty for years and years. The bill also streamlines the deportation process of aliens who commit crimes in the U.S., and toughens the entrance visa standards, to stop dangerous foreigners from ever entering America. Also, those who commit acts of burning or bombing federal property will face stiffer penalties.

A separate bill on immigration reform has passed the House, for beefing up security along our nations borders to stop illegal entry. It redoubles efforts by authorizing 5,000 additional border agents through the year 2000. Overlooked by some are the tougher sentencing provisions included with the House passed measure to repeal President Clinton's 1994 ban on so called assault weapons. Rather than using a ban that is high on pretense and short on results (After all, crooks and dangerous persons are the ones who ignore gun control laws.), the measure instead cracks down on ALL crimes committed with a firearm. It establishes mandatory minimum prison sentences for those convicted, such as: 5 years for possessing a firearm while committing a crime, 10 years for brandishing that firearm, and 20 years for discharging it with the intent to injure another person. (The so-called assault weapons ban singled out firearms which are rarely used in crimes, less than 1 percent of homicides, and even then only restricted the guns that looked the worst in publicity photos, even though they have no greater punch than many other guns which remained perfectly legal. And it did not cover automatic weapons or machine guns; those were outlawed from general private possession back in the 1930s!! The entire proposal was based on media hype and scare tactics, not commonsense law enforcement.)

We need laws (and judges) to be tough on crime and terrorism, and prisons that keep the dangerous locked away, to isolate them from menacing our homes and families. Congress is making those efforts. And, because most law enforcement is at the state and local level, our states must continue to make them, too.

HHS ISSUES FINAL RULE TO REQUIRE MEDICARE AND MEDICAID MANAGED CARE ORGANIZATIONS TO DISCLOSE PHYSICIAN INCENTIVE PLANS

From The Department of Health and Human Services

■(WASHINGTON) The Department of Health and Human Services Tuesday announced a regulation designed to protect beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid Managed care plans by placing certain limitations on physician incentive arrangements that could influence physicians' care decisions.

Many managed care organizations use financial incentives to deter inappropriate and unnecessary care, including unnecessary referrals of plan members to specialists or for expensive procedures.

The final rule, to be published in tomorrow's Federal Register, requires plans to disclose physician incentive plans to HHS' Health Care Financing Administration or to the state Medicaid agency, and to provide a summary of the plan to enrollees, if requested.

For example, some plans pay their physicians a fixed fee per patient per month. This arrangement, known as capitation payment, makes the primary care physician liable for any costs the patient incurs for specialty care made at the referral of the primary care physician. Thus, the more referrals the physician makes, the lower payment the primary care physician retains. This leads to an incentive to minimize referrals.

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