

Therefore, we urge that Section 620, Title 38, United States Code, be amended to authorize payments up to 45 per centum of hospital costs in establishing amounts that the VA may pay for nursing home care of those veterans requiring such care.

It is perhaps pertinent at this juncture to point out that the provision of 45 per centum is consonant with a recent agreement entered into by the United Automobile Workers Union and nursing homes in the Detroit area. In that agreement, the Union agrees to reimburse nursing homes up to 50 per centum of the area's hospital day.

In summary then, the ANHA makes these comments:

(1) The Veterans Administration is to be complimented on the soundness of the operation of its program at this time.

(2) The program—very limited in scope now—should be expanded along with the VAs other programs to alleviate the long term use of acute hospital beds.

(3) The program finds itself in difficulty as the impact of Medicare on the total health care community forces up the cost of all medical, nursing and hospital services.

(4) The Committee should report favorably on H.R. 7481 as introduced by Representative Teague.

(5) The Committee should press the passage of H.R. 7481 in both the House and the Senate.

Respectfully submitted,

ALFRED S. ERCOLANO, *Executive Director.*

Mr. PICKENS. Mr. Walker has been president of the American Nursing Home Association for 2 years. He owns and administers three nursing

Mr. EVERETT. Without objection, it will be entered in the record with your testimony when it is received.

Mr. WALKER. I would like to speak to the effect that this ruling would have in three areas. One is the effect upon the veterans and their families, which has to be the prime consideration here. I am thinking of the last three veteran patients we have cared for. They are the ones whose names and medical records, diagnoses, and medical treatment I am going to supply to the committee.

I am thinking of a man named Forest Johnson, who gave the very best he had for this country and is taking advantage of this program. He lives about 100 miles from a VA hospital. When Mr. Johnson was in the hospital his little wife, with her very limited budget, had to traverse the 100 miles from Miami, Okla., to the VA hospital by bus or get somebody to take her there, and she perhaps had to stay in a motel. Each visit would cost about \$25 or \$30 and she could only go every 30 or 60 days. At the present time Mr. Johnson is in Miami and his family is near him and can visit him daily. He has been very ill. For a while we thought he wasn't going to make it. He has to have standby oxygen and he requires skilled medical care. At the present time his family is with him and he is getting along well and we hope he will be able to return to his home with the nursing care we are giving him.