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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
(Greece, New York)-----
REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
DEDICATION OF THE PARK RIDGE HOSPITAL
GREECE, NEW YORK

September 5, 1975

I am delighted to be here today at the invitation of your Congressman, Barber Conable, one of the great lawmakers of our Nation, a respected member of the House Ways and Means Committee, an outstanding leader in the Congress, and a man highly esteemed by his colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Two years ago I was unable to attend your groundbreaking ceremony for this fine new Park Ridge Hospital. I had to be content with sending a congratulatory message. Today, I am delighted to be back home in New York and to be back in Monroe County and to dedicate this facility which strengthens your standing as one of the most progressive and impressive parts of this country.

And I want to say how much I admire the concern of all the private citizens, like Ralph Destephano, who gave of his talents so tirelessly for so long as head of the citizens' committee. I also congratulate Mr. Woods and the doctors and staff who will operate the hospital. And I know how important and helpful it has been to have Barber Conable supporting this project all the way.

This hospital epitomizes the American way of getting things done -- when we do them right. The idea for the hospital was born in the minds of concerned local citizens. It was financed in part by private funds. And it was funded for the most part -- 90 percent -- by loans guaranteed by the State. That loan guarantee program was passed during the years I had the privilege of serving as Governor, so please forgive me if I take a little special satisfaction in sharing this day with you.

Good health facilities such as the new Park Ridge Hospital have an importance that extends beyond medical care alone. In order for every American to have the chance to reach his or her fullest human potential, two things are absolutely necessary -- the opportunity to get an education and the opportunity to enjoy good health. Given these two very basic opportunities, people in our free society can go just as far as their God-given talents will take them.

In my opinion, access to health care ought to be a fundamental human right. It belongs up there with freedom of speech and the rest of the Bill of Rights -- and for the same reason -- because our society benefits as a whole to the extent that every American can better himself or herself as an individual.

Recently, I took part in the announcement of a health care productivity center that is opening up in Texas with Federal and local hospital funds. The principle purpose of this productivity center is to get maximum value out of every dollar, every doctor and every piece of equipment through cooperative arrangements between hospitals. For example, through shared purchasing, hospitals can buy supplies in volume at discounts ranging up to 35 percent. Or take the case of shared equipment. A linear accelerator used to give cancer patients cobalt treatment costs about \$400,000. It is far less costly to have one such machine being used fully on a shared basis than to

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have two or three of them in nearby hospitals being underused. Through shared purchasing, shared personnel and shared equipment and other good management, the Texas Productivity Center expects to save about \$14 million for its participating hospitals in the next two years. This is money which would otherwise have to come out of the pockets of patients in the form of higher medical bills, insurance premiums or taxes.

When it comes to health, we need to achieve two things -- health security for all Americans and good management, cost controls and efficiency in the delivery of medical care.

Obviously, we do not need a totally government dominated and dictated approach -- some sort of socialistic answer which would smother American ingenuity and send medical costs soaring further. What we do need is a system of health care that will build on what we have; one that will preserve freedom of choice for patients and medical practitioners; and one that will assure every American of health security without undermining the economy that must finance everything to which we aspire.

I am optimistic that we will be equal to the task. My optimism is rooted in these facts. We in America have a health care system of great diversity and, therefore, of great vitality. In typical American tradition, there are both public and private elements to it -- and thus it contains creative diversity, rather than cramped conformity. Secondly, we Americans are inventive and innovative people. We have a problem-solving orientation. We admire action. We are going to achieve health security for the American people. We can do it. And the most encouraging proof that we can, is the sense of individual commitment, professional capability and public and private cooperation we have witnessed here today. My warmest congratulations to all of you.

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