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YOUR VIEW

Vote on kidney care crucial to Alabamians, Americans alike

Alabama is home to more than 6,321 dialysis patients — a number which, unfortunately, is almost certain to grow in 2006. Chances are that very soon, even more Opelika, Auburn and surrounding area residents will suffer from some form of kidney disease or kidney failure requiring lifesaving dialysis treatments, which take over the kidneys' function of filtering waste from the blood.

This year alone, more than 400,000 Americans will suffer from kidney failure resulting from genetics, and from conditions such as diabetes and hypertension. That number is expected to quadruple in the next 25 years, disproportionately affecting minorities.

That's why, on behalf of the dialysis facilities in Opelika, Auburn and surrounding areas, I applaud the U.S. Senate for passing a 1.6 percent increase of the Medicare reimbursement rate for Medicare's dialysis program. It's important for patients who need access to quality dialysis care in order to remain productive members of society.

The 30-year-old Medicare program, which many of our friends and neighbors rely on for their care, is outdated and simply cannot keep pace with the rising tide of kidney failure in this country. Thankfully, the Senate has voted to pass important legislation which would not only ensure that dialysis patients continue receive high-quality care, but also, that the millions of Americans at risk for kidney failure receive the education and prevention information they need to avoid kidney failure or better manage their diseases. The fate of this crucial legislation now hangs in the balance as the House prepares to vote.

The kidney community awaits the day when strategies for prevention are universally observed, but in the interim, we applaud members of Congress acknowledging the community's need for adequate resources to sustain quality care today and in the future.

**DEB MORRIS RN, CNN
OPELIKA GROUP AREA MANAGER
ALABAMA REGION
FRESENIUS MEDICAL CARE**



Comment on Auburn City Council member not appropriate

The Opelika City Council is considering a more restrictive smoking ordinance, and to nobody's surprise, Bob Mount is against it. What was surprising, however, was Mount's ad hominem comment about an Auburn City Council member, presumably because Mr. Mount disagrees with the Auburn ordinance passed three years ago.

The comment was rude, uncalled for, and added nothing to the public debate about Opelika's proposed ordinance. It does, however, speak volumes about Mr. Mount.

**JAMES D. HANSON
AUBURN**

Restrictions can cause more harm to society than secondhand smoke

Freedom or fascism? What will the City Council of Opelika decide? The correct choice for a free society is to support private property rights and not use the coercive power of the government to impose regulations and restrictions on private property owners. This is not a public health issue. It is about freedom and property rights. It is about supporting the rights of property owners to make business decisions for themselves and not having those decisions dictated to them by well-intentioned but mis-

guided politician gooders.

We are all aware and restaurants? They had the free decisions these motivated by economic health considerations make the decision forced on them.

If the ban passes have the added ordinance that they since they now have a smoke-free environment be drawn on infringe. What is next? Reg "obesity epidemic"

If a person is no rights, then no are government intrusions, the project risk causing more hand smoke could should guard against, no matter how

You're Welco

The Opelika-Aub from readers and those we deem appropriate. Letters must be addressed and daytime. Letters should be. All letters are submitted. Mail: Letters to the Opelika-Auburn 3505 Pepper Opelika AL. Fax: (334) 749-12. E-mail: jmcadory@

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