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MONDAY

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SENATOR SAM ERVIN ★ SAYS ★



WASHINGTON — Congress returns to Capitol Hill in the mood that things will be somewhat different this session. The attitude which prevailed in recent sessions that broad social programs were required for the welfare of the country seems tempered by the fact that the Vietnam conflict has placed restraint on domestic spending programs.

Still the catalog of legislative issues gives notice that this mood is not likely to produce a dull or altogether harmonious session. The issues that have plagued the country — defense, taxes, social security benefits, civil rights proposals, poverty programs, and governmental reforms — are certain to be renewed. National defense is a prime topic for attention, and its many problems are enough to keep Congress busy for most of the session.

Ervin's proposals have been a ready-made for legislative action for years, and his proposals of last year's session have been the same. He says that the government's budget is too large, that it is a burden on the people, and that it is a violation of the Constitution. He says that the government should be run like a business, and that it should be held accountable to the people. He says that the government should be run like a business, and that it should be held accountable to the people.

Support seems to have waned for the present, at least, for repeal of state "right-to-work" laws, some of the anti-poverty proposals, and massive appropriations to remake our largest metropolitan cities. Budget considerations play a large role in the public attitude toward some poverty and "demonstration cities" proposals.

One of the tasks which I will undertake at this session will be the organization of a new judicial subcommittee on separation of governmental powers. The Subcommittee will go into operation soon, and as its Chairman, I hope to do constructive work in a field that requires serious legislative attention.

The heart of the new Subcommittee's work will be to review the trespasses which the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of government have been perpetrating upon each other in violation of the powers granted to each branch of the government by the Constitution.

The proper functioning of the Federal Government is closely tied up to the separation of powers problem. In its largest sense the problem affects the individual rights of every citizen.

The individual right of privacy has been a growing problem as it relates to Federal employees and citizen consultants to the govern-

Older people in the Asheville district office area who have paid doctor bills but have not yet claimed their medical insurance payments (under Medicare) are invited to have their claims checked by the Asheville social security office before mailing them in for payment, James E. Robertson, district manager, declared today.

"In the first six months of the medicare program some benefit payments have been delayed because the claimers did not include all the necessary information with their claims," he explained.

Robertson said that most people will probably need this help only the first time they file a medical insurance claim. "The Medicare Handbook which is given to all beneficiaries explains how to make the claims," he said. "The 'Request for Payment' form is relatively simple, but most people can use some tips and advice the first time they apply. We're glad to offer assistance, and believe we can help many people avoid some delay in receiving payment."

Robertson noted that the medicare claim may be made either by the patient or by the doctor if he accepts assignment of the insurance. If the doctor applies for the medicare payment, he bills the patient only for any part of the \$50 deductible that still remains to be paid and for 20 percent of the bill over the \$50 deductible.

Under the other method of payment the doctor bills the patient, the patient pays the bill, and then the patient sends the completed request-for-payment form — together with itemized receipted bills — to the medicare carrier. A statement from the doctor showing the treatment given and the charges already paid by the patient must be furnished either on the request-for-payment form or on a separate receipted bill.

In the 16-county Asheville area, medicare doctor bill insurance is handled by the Pilot Life Insurance Company, Greensboro, N. C. The simple one-page request-for-payment form is mailed to that company (the insurance carrier), no matter whether the payment will be made direct to the patient or to the doctor. Doctors' offices, accustomed to filling out insurance forms, should have no difficulty in providing the necessary items

of information, Robertson noted. But handling of forms received direct from medicare beneficiaries is sometimes delayed because some essential item of information has been omitted.

"Since numbers of people have the same names, if the beneficiary leaves out his medicare identification number — for example — we cannot verify that he is signed up for the doctor bill insurance, or how much of his deductible amount may have been paid. Some elderly people with failing eyesight are unable to make legible entries. And some do not get

ment. Again at this session, I expect to press for action for legislation to correct abuses which the Federal bureaucracy is practicing upon its employees.

All in all the problems at home and abroad will make for a busy session.

adequately itemized receipts from their physicians, or forget to enclose the receipts with their claims. If the request-for-payment form is incomplete or improperly filled out the medicare carrier has to write back to the beneficiary, thus delaying the payment.

"The social security office does not make the decision or pay the claim," Robertson stated. "The law requires that the payments be handled through the officially approved medicare insurance carriers. But we can answer general questions about medicare and help people in the Asheville area get their applications ready for review by the carrier."

"If an older person cannot visit the social security office in person, he can send the forms by mail or by someone else. But in this case, he should be sure to give his telephone number as well as his address."

The Asheville social security office is located at 560 South French Broad Avenue, Asheville, N. C. The phone number is 252-8773. The office hours are 8:45 a. m. to 5:00 p. m. Monday through Friday, and 9:00 a. m. to 1:00 p. m. on Saturday. Those who are unable to come to the Asheville district office may contact the representative when he is in Burnsville.

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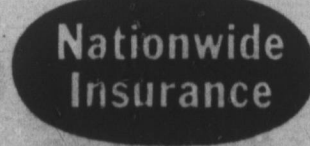
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