

TX rep remembers David Vetter, "boy in the plastic bubble"

April 23, 2009

Rep. Kevin Brady is marking the 25th anniversary of the death of Texan David Vetter, the 12-year-old "boy in the plastic bubble."

Brady, a Republican from The Woodlands, introduced bipartisan legislation in the House today to provide others access to life saving treatment through Medicare.

Vetter, a resident of Shenandoah, Texas in Brady's congressional district, died in 1984 at the age of 12 after living in a specially sterilized plastic cocoon to combat severe combined immune deficiency syndrome.

The condition left David without the ability to combat any infections.

Brady's legislation would enable Medicare to provide additional financial support to patients suffering from the same condition who are receiving intravenous immune globulin treatment known as IVIG. The plasma-derived product helps immunity-impaired patients to fight life-threatening infections and illnesses.



Texan David Vetter

"For those with immune deficiency, IVIG therapy in the right setting and at the right price is critical to sustaining a normal life", said Brady, who has championed the issue as a member of the House Ways and Means Committee. "Our bill ensures that Medicare addresses their unique needs in a timely and cost-effective manner."

Brady said his legislation would grant the secretary of health and human services the authority to revise Medicare payment for IVIG therapy and provide broader coverage for at home infusion.

"Songs were written and movies made honoring David," Brady said. "But the best way to honor his struggle is to make this necessary treatment available to those who need it."

David's mother dedicated her life to finding better treatments and research into the disease, Brady said.

"Looking back at my struggle with my son David's condition so many years ago, I am thankful that IVIG provides many with an effective treatment that allows them to live normal lives," said Carol Ann Demaret. " This legislation will provide the means for Medicare to review and update its IVIG payment policy and hopefully to improve access."

Brady's co-sponsors for the measure included Reps. Steve Israel, D-N.Y., and Rep. Allyson Schwartz, D-Pa.