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### U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Mr. INOUYE. Mr. President, on August 5, 2010, I was presented with the flag of the United States Public Health Service by the Commissioned Officers Association, COA, of the U.S. Public Health Service, PHS, and its affiliated PHS Commissioned Officers Foundation. The Public Health Service Commissioned Corps is one of our Nation's seven uniformed services. When the COA was kind enough to present me with their Health Leader of the Year Award several weeks ago, it was noted that, while I had the flags of the five armed services displayed in my office on Capitol Hill, there was no PHS flag to complete the display.

The first thing I noticed when presented with the PHS flag was its color—a bright yellow field with dark blue crest and inscription. The PHS flag reveals the history of our Nation's Public Health Service. The Public Health Service traces its origins to 1798 with the passage of an "Act for the Relief of Sick and Disabled Seamen." The economic survival of our young country was almost totally dependent on maritime commerce and this law was aimed at protecting the health of merchant seaman, without whose labors the young nation would not long survive, much less prosper.

Medical quarantine of ships found to be carriers of disease was an essential tool in protecting the commercial interests of the United States. The PHS flag is the same yellow color as the maritime "quebec" signal flag which is the international signal for a ship under quarantine.

Emblazoned on the yellow field of the PHS flag is a crossed "fouled" anchor and caduceus. The fouled

anchor—an anchor wrapped by its chain and thus unusable—is the symbol of a ship or sailor in distress. Interestingly, the caduceus in the PHS crest is the mark of Hermes, the Greek god of commerce—later the Roman god Mercury—and consists of a staff with two entwined serpents. The caduceus, emblem of commerce, is often confused with the ancient Greek Rod of Asclepius—a staff entwined by a single serpent—which represents the healing arts.

So the crest of the Public Health Service signifies the importance of protecting the Nation's commercial interests by ensuring we have a healthy workforce. This is as critical to the United States today as it was in 1798—and we are faced in the 21st century with perhaps more threats to the health of our workforce than ever before.

Leadership in the protection of our Nation's public health originates within the Public Health Service whose origins can be traced to that 1798 law passed by Congress. And leadership within the Public Health Service is embodied by the Office of the Surgeon General and the officers of the PHS Commissioned Corps. These uniformed health professionals are essential defenders of our national security which is dependent on a healthy population—the bedrock upon which is built our commerce and our national defense.

We all owe these PHS Commissioned Corps officers our support for their often unheralded efforts in protecting and promoting the Nation's security. I am proud to honor their service by displaying the PHS flag in my personal office on Capitol Hill.