

From: [March, Joseph H.](#)
To: [Public Relations Division](#)
Subject: News Release: House action aims to protect TRICARE
Date: Tuesday, May 22, 2012 9:12:03 AM
Importance: High

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

House action aims to protect TRICARE

Senate must now follow suit, says American Legion national commander.

WASHINGTON (May 22, 2012) – The leader of the nation’s largest wartime veterans organization is pleased that the U.S. House of Representatives has passed a Pentagon budget draft that includes protections for military retirees who use TRICARE, the military’s health-care insurance program.

“The American Legion has long resisted any move that would burden those who have served our nation and sacrificed on its behalf, by increasing their health-insurance costs,” American Legion National Commander Fang A. Wong said. “I am, therefore, very pleased that the U.S. House, in its treatment of the next National Defense Authorization Act, has chosen to protect military retirees from increased health-care costs.”

Over the past two years, The American Legion has adopted a pair of resolutions calling for protections against TRICARE cost increases to military retirees. The latest resolution calls for The American Legion to “prevail upon this administration and the Department of Defense to reconsider any proposals to implement any increases in military retirees’ TRICARE enrollment fees, deductibles or premiums (and) that any increase must be directly tied to and not exceed the annual cost of living adjustment percentage provided to retirees.”

The House-passed draft of the Fiscal 2013 National Defense Authorization Act omits mention of military retirees’ health insurance. This absence of legislative language, by intent, has the effect of blocking most TRICARE cost increases that have been proposed by the current administration.

President Obama’s Fiscal 2013 health care budget for the Department of Defense proposes to shift billions in costs to retired military families over the next 10 years by increasing fees and co-payments. Included are hikes in prescription drug co-pays and health-care deductibles for military retirees, using a tiered approach based on their retired pay. Fee hikes on par with the rate of health-care cost inflation are also proposed by the administration. The House action effectively dismisses these proposals. “However, passage in the House of a defense budget that helps shield TRICARE from cost increases wins a battle but not the war,” Wong said. “The Senate, with the same sense of moral obligation to those who have spent their careers protecting our freedoms, must act similarly.”

Aside from the Senate copy of the National Defense Authorization Act is a bill co-

sponsored by Sens. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., and Marco Rubio, R-Fla., designed specifically to protect military retirees who use TRICARE against dramatic increases to co-pay, enrollment and other fees.

Provisions in the recently introduced Military Health Care Protection Act of 2012 echo American Legion resolutions in limiting deductibles, out-of-pocket medical expense cap and pharmacy copayment increases to a percentage no higher than the annual retiree cost of living adjustment.

-30-

Contacts: Craig Roberts: 202-263-2982, croberts@legion.org or Marty Callaghan: 202-263-5758, mcallaghan@legion.org