

Legislative Update on Chiropractic

CONGRESS EXTENDS CHIROPRACTIC MILITARY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT ANOTHER YEAR; HOUSE PASSES BILL REQUIRING VA TO DEVELOP POLICY ON CHIROPRACTIC

Editorial Staff

You may have been wondering what ever became of the Chiropractic Demonstration Project in the military. Well, it's been extended ... again. The Fiscal Year 2000 Defense Authorization Act, which was signed into law by President Clinton on Oct. 5, has authorized one more year for a pilot project that is supposed to determine chiropractic's future in the military.

The Chiropractic Demonstration Project legislation was introduced in 1994 by Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1995 established the project, calling for a three-year pilot project beginning in 1996. Doctors of chiropractic were hired on a contractual basis to treat military personnel and their families at 10 military facilities. The project was then expanded to three more facilities and extended to Sept. 30, 1999.

The new legislation mandates that the Department of Defense makes its recommendations on the demonstration project by March 31, 2000.

The data from the project will determine if chiropractic will become a permanent part of military health care, and if DCs will be getting military commissions. The new bill also moves up the date for the DOD to present its report to Congress from May 1, 2000 to January 31, 2000.

The ACA acknowledged Rep. James Talent (R-MO), Rep. Steve Buyer (R-IN) and Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC) for championing the DOD bill.

Veterans' Millenium Health Care Act

In the Aug. 23, 1999 issue, we reported that the lobbying efforts of the American Chiropractic Association and the Association of Chiropractic Colleges had prompted a provision in House bill 2116 to require the Undersecretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs to "establish a policy for the Veterans Health Administration regarding the role of chiropractic treatment in the care of veterans under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code." (See "Veterans Health Care Act Mandates Establishing Chiropractic's Role" in *DC*, Aug. 23, 1999, or in the ChiroWeb archives.)

At the time of that writing, the bill was awaiting a vote. HR 2116, now dubbed the Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act, was passed (369-46 with 18 abstentions) by the House of Representatives on Sept. 21, 1999 and referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. A provision in HR 2116 stipulates that the VA must establish chiropractic's role in the VA health care within three months of the passage of the bill.

The bill was introduced on the House floor on June 9th by Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-FL) and received bipartisan cosponsorship from Bob Stump (R-AZ), Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) and Lane Evans (D-IL).

Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA) commented on the bill's passage: "Even though chiropractic is the most widespread of the complementary approaches to medicine in the U.S. - serving roughly 27 million patients - and even though Congress has recognized chiropractic care in other areas of the federal health care system, the VA has chosen not to make chiropractic routinely available to veterans. This bill changes that."

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