

Defense Bill Directs Military to Provide "Detailed Plans" for Commissioning DCs

ALSO EXPEDITES REPORT ON CHIROPRACTIC CHAMPUS PILOT PROJECT

Dynamic Chiropractic Staff

The House Armed Services Committee has passed its version of the 1994 National Defense Authorization bill that includes a provision directing the secretaries of the military departments to "submit detailed plans" how the services will approach the "initial commissioning of DCs, the expansion of chiropractic within the medical community, and the maintenance of a career chiropractic force with DCs serving as full participants with the military medical system."

Friday October 23, 1992 marks an historic date in chiropractic history. On that day, President Bush signed the 1993 National Defense bill (HR 5006). Tucked away in Section 505 of that monstrous document was the authorization of the Secretary of Defense to "appoint chiropractors as commissioned officers in the armed forces to provide chiropractic care within the military health care system." The provision required that regulations be written to put the authority in place no later than April 21, 1993.

While the Department of Defense has since issued guidance to the services regarding regulation requirements, and the services have issued interim regulations, the House Armed Services Committee recognized the lack of commitment by the services to give the commissioning of officers serious consideration. The committee has called not only for a "timetable for achieving goals," but "wartime requirements and the role of DCs in a combat theater."

House Armed Services Committee Passes Provision to Expedite CHAMPUS Pilot Project Report on Chiropractic

The passage of the 1994 National Defense Authorization bill by the House Armed Services Committee also directs the Pentagon to complete its report on the two-year CHAMPUS (Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services) chiropractic pilot project. The pilot project used the CHAMPUS population in Washington state and Colorado to study the benefit and efficacy of chiropractic care. Some 1,100 DCs and 5,700 CHAMPUS beneficiaries generated 50,000 claims. The project ended March 1, 1992, and a final report was expected in December that same year. Delays are due apparently because of late claim filings.

Congressman Lane Evans (D-IL), who introduced the commissioning bill in the House in 1990, has also been instrumental in getting a provision added to the 1994 National Defense Authorization bill that requires the Pentagon to expeditiously complete a report on the CHAMPUS pilot project. The findings of that report will be an important factor in determining whether chiropractic care will be included under CHAMPUS.

Ike Skelton (D-MO), chairman of the Military Forces and Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, added his support by stating that "... chiropractic will ultimately prove to be a valuable addition to CHAMPUS ..."

