

## Lack of a Plan Brings Demand

### ARMED FORCES WILL RECEIVE CHIROPRACTIC

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Obviously tired of waiting for the Secretary of Defense to create a plan to provide chiropractic care for all U.S. military personnel, the House has passed H.R.5658, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009. This legislation will require such care be provided. (Please see "Directive Orders Pentagon to Make Chiropractic More Readily Available," beginning on the front page of this issue.) "Chiropractic Health Care for Members on Active Duty," Section 704 of the bill, includes important language that gives insight into how Congress views chiropractic.

- "Entitled" - Section 704 makes chiropractic part of the care provided to all "members of the uniformed services." That translates into well over 1 million potential new patients who will receive access to chiropractic as a standard part of their regular care. As U.S. service personnel enter and exit the armed forces, they will be exposed to the benefits of chiropractic as a natural component of their health care.
- "Only by a Doctor of Chiropractic" - The language in this bill is very specific: "Such chiropractic services may be provided only by a doctor of chiropractic." In fact, this exact sentence appears twice in Section 704. This suggests Congress has a clear understanding that chiropractic services may only be provided by a doctor of chiropractic, not a DO, PT, MD or anyone else. It also is important to note that "doctor of chiropractic" is used, rather than "chiropractor."
- "Deployed Members" Demonstration Project - The bill allows the Secretary of Defense to conduct "one or more demonstration projects to provide chiropractic services to deployed members of the uniformed services." This will place doctors of chiropractic all over the world, giving those U.S. doctors the opportunity to interface with DCs in the countries they serve.
- "Chiropractic Services" Defined - If you look carefully at Congress' definition of chiropractic services, you quickly see they include "X-ray." The language is inclusive, as it provides for the "diagnosis, evaluation and management, and therapeutic services for the treatment of a patient's health condition, including neuromusculoskeletal conditions and the subluxation complex." The bill also is chiropractic philosophy-sensitive in its language - a refreshing change compared to bills of the past.
- Broad Scope Language "for Treatment of a Patient's Health Condition" - The bill opens the possibility for the DC to utilize traditional chiropractic in combination with "such other services determined appropriate by the Secretary and as authorized under State law." This unrestrictive language gives each DC the opportunity to best serve the needs of their military patients.

But the bill is not yet law. After being passed by the House, it has been introduced in the Senate and is now on the Senate legislative calendar.

Obviously, the passage of H.R.5658 would be a great benefit to our profession. If you haven't done so already, search online for your senator's Web site and send them an e-mail showing your support of H.R.5658 and particularly Section 704; "Chiropractic Health Care for Members on Active Duty."

Perhaps more importantly, the language in this bill should be a prototype for all future bills relating to chiropractic. Everyone is entitled to chiropractic care that is inclusive of all chiropractic philosophies, broad enough in scope to best serve the needs of the patient, and provided only by doctors of chiropractic. This concept is something we should all be able to support.

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