

Breaking Down the Barriers to VA Access

WILL LATEST FULL-INCLUSION BILL GET THROUGH CONGRESS?

Peter W. Crownfield

This year's headline could well have been last year's headline - or just about any year since 2002, for that matter, when President George Bush signed the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act (Public Law 107-135) into law. "Another Year, Another VA Bill: Time for Congress to Make Full Inclusion a Reality" read our April 9, 2009 front-page headline, and it's becoming an annual call to arms for the chiropractic profession. Why? Because less than 25 percent of VA medical centers currently provide chiropractic services, and [there is no nationally mandated expansion plan](#).¹

But what if this year is different? The House of Representatives passed H.R. 1017, the Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act, by a 365-6 margin on May 24, 2010; the act is currently under Senate consideration.² Introduced by perennial pro-chiropractic legislator Bob Filner (D-Calif.), a strong supporter of giving our military (active-duty personnel and veterans) full access to chiropractic care, H.R. 1017 amends the Enhancement Act of 2001 to require that at least 75 VA medical centers have a doctor of chiropractic on staff by Dec. 31, 2011, and that all centers (153 nationwide)³ staff a DC by the end of 2013. (*Note:* This bill was introduced in February 2009, prompting our "Another Year, Another VA Bill" headline, ironically, and originally mandated implementation dates of Dec. 31, 2010 for 75 or more VA centers and Dec. 31, 2012 for implementation at all centers. Those dates were adjusted before the bill went to a vote in 2010.)

Chiropractic organizations including the American Chiropractic Association (ACA) are lobbying heavily for passage of the legislation, of course. [Commented ACA President Rick McMichael, DC, following the House vote](#): "For too long, veterans have been denied access to the chiropractic care that they want, need and deserve through the VA. I am proud that ACA has worked closely with our congressional allies, such as Rep. Filner, on behalf of our nation's heroes and in support of this important bill."⁴

As of press time, H.R. 1017 has been received in the Senate, read twice and referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs.

References

1. ["Giving Our Veterans the Care They Deserve: An Update on the Veterans Health Administration Chiropractic Program](#) by Anthony Lisi, DC, Director of Chiropractic Services." *Dynamic Chiropractic*, Jan. 29, 2009.
2. H.R. 1017: Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act. 11th Congress, 2009-2010. Introduced Feb. 12, 2009, by Rep. Bob Filner.
3. Maze B. "Bill: Bring Chiropractors to More Vet Centers." *Navy Times* (online), April 29, 2010.
4. ["House Passes Bill to Expand Chiropractic Care to All Major VA Medical Centers."](#) American Chiropractic Association press release, May 24, 2010.

You can track the progress of H.R. 1017 at www.govtrack.us; if the bill passes the full Senate and

reaches the president's desk, look for complete details in an upcoming issue of *DC*.



JULY 2010

©2024 Dynamic Chiropractic™ All Rights Reserved