

Latest All-Access Vet Bill Introduced

Editorial Staff

Will 2011 be the year Congress passes (and the president signs) legislation requiring that all Veterans Administration (VA) health care facilities have at least one doctor of chiropractic on staff? If this is the year, it will end a frustrating annual trend that has lasted nearly 10 years: introduce legislation, get excited about its potential passage, then see Congress take its winter recess without voting on it, leaving millions of needy veterans without chiropractic care for yet another year.

The latest legislative cause for optimism is H.R. 329, the [Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act](#), introduced by Rep. Bob Filner (D-Calif.), House Veterans Affairs Committee member, on Jan. 11, 2011. The legislation would "amend the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001 and title 38, United States Code, to require the provision of chiropractic care and services to veterans at all Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and to expand access to such care and services," specifically by expanding the current program (which staffs doctors of chiropractic at 36 U.S. veterans facilities) "to be carried out at not fewer than 75 medical centers by not later than December 31, 2012, and at all medical centers [153 nationwide] by not later than December 31, 2014."

"Our nation's veterans and active-duty military, along with their family members, have sacrificed so much for our country. They deserve the best health care available, and that includes chiropractic care," said Rick McMichael, DC, president of the ACA. "It makes me proud to see the chiropractic profession working with our congressional allies in support of this important legislation." The ACA and the Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) have both expressed their support for the new legislation.

H.R. 329 (the full text of which is available online at <http://thomas.loc.gov>, where you can also track the bill's progress through Congress) is essentially the same legislation introduced in previous years except the implementation dates have been adjusted accordingly. Last year, the pro-chiropractic legislation - also introduced by Rep. Filner, a perennial chiropractic advocate in Congress - made some of its best progress, with the House of Representatives actually [passing H.R. 1017 on May 24, 2010](#). The Senate, however, failed to vote on the bill and the legislation effectively "died" when the congressional session ended last year.

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