

Public Health Service Corps to Include DCs?

ACT MAKES DCS ELIGIBLE, MANDATES APPOINTMENTS.

Editorial Staff

Reps. Gene Green (D-Texas) and Lee Terry (R-Neb.) have introduced legislation that calls for doctors of chiropractic to be appointed as officers in the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps, one of the nation's seven uniformed services. The USPHS Commissioned Corps currently features more than 6,000 public health professionals representing a variety of health care fields, such as medical physicians, nurses, dentists, physical and occupational therapists, and dietitians - but no doctors of chiropractic. That would all change with the passage of H.R. 6032, the Chiropractic Membership in the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Act of 2010.

According to H.R. 6032, "Doctors of Chiropractic as graduates of colleges of chiropractic whose graduates are eligible for licensure to practice chiropractic in a majority of the States of the United States, or approved by a body or bodies acceptable to the Secretary, shall be eligible for appointment as officers in the commissioned Regular Corps and the Ready Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service. The Secretary and the Surgeon General shall ensure that such Doctors of Chiropractic are trained, equipped, and otherwise prepared to fulfill applicable public health and emergency response service responsibilities in the Commissioned Corps." The legislation also mandates that "[n]ot later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President, in consultation with the Surgeon General and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall commence the appointment of no fewer than 6 Doctors of Chiropractic into the commissioned Regular Corps and the Ready Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service."

Members of the USPHS Commissioned Corps "provide essential public health and health care services to underserved and disadvantaged populations; prevent and control injury and the spread of disease; ensure that the Nation's food supply, drinking water, drugs, medical devices, and environment are safe; conduct and support cutting-edge research for the prevention, treatment, and elimination of disease, health disparities, and injury; work with other nations and international agencies to address global health challenges and provide urgently needed public health and clinical expertise in response to large-scale local, regional, and national public health emergencies and disasters." For more information, visit www.usphs.gov.

SEPTEMBER 2010