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## PRESS RELEASE

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## **ROA Voices Concern Over TRICARE Increase**

WASHINGTON – The Reserve Officers Association, concerned about the recent announcement by the Department of Defense of the increase to TRICARE Standard inpatient co-pays, sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates voicing their opinion Oct 5.

With DoD's announcement, hospital inpatient co-pays would be increased by \$110 per day for retired servicemembers, family members and survivors as of October 1.

Earlier this year Secretary Gates said TRICARE fees would not be increased in FY-2010, and that he wanted to start a dialogue.

"ROA is disappointed to see a step away from this policy," said Rear Adm. Paul T. Kayye, ROA President and retired Navy reservist. "ROA has always been flexible about fees on the condition that DoD present its health care cost data." Such data has not been provided.

Because of larger co-payments of 25 percent after the deductible, TRICARE Standard is already the most expensive program. Increasing its expense will cause beneficiaries to transition into Prime, and increase DoD's cost.

"The costs of TRICARE Standard must be analyzed from a total cost rather than initial cost perspective," said Admiral Kayye.

This is an issue ROA has followed for a number of years. As stated in ROA's March 2006 Congressional Testimony: "The health care issues that are before us are not black and white. No single source for solution is the best one. Outreach to many groups should be encouraged to solicit various concepts. ROA favors open dialogue and the generation of new ideas in support of the best solution."

"Raising fees without warning, does not build confidence toward finding a win/win solution," said Admiral Kayye. "For two years, the Pentagon charged too much for TRICARE Reserve Select premiums. Rates were only reduced after a GAO paper identified the excessive premiums, and an act of Congress required the premium to be reduced."

ROA fears that DoD will raise these premiums again, unfairly placing the higher health care costs on National Guard and Reserve members and sought assurances from Secretary gates such a rate hike will not occur.

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"Increasing TRICARE fees will cause further confusion for military retirees who are already nervous and short fused over the National Health Care debate," said Admiral Kayye. "They fear its impact on TRICARE and TRICARE For Life. DoD's credibility with them is eroding with further fee increases."

The Reserve Officers Association's position is that fee increases need to be addressed at a later time when there are better cost estimates for health care available.

The Reserve Officers Association is the professional association for all uniformed services of the United States. Chartered by Congress and in existence since 1922, ROA advises and educates the Congress, the President and the American people on issues of national security, with unique expertise on Reserve issues. ROA advocates for adequate funding of equipment and training requirements, recruiting and retention incentives, and employment rights for all members of the Reserve.