

National Military and Veterans Alliance

5535 Hempstead Way, Springfield, VA 22151 Phone: (703) 750-1342 ext. 1008

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March 13, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama President of the United States The White House Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

The National Military and Veterans Alliance, representing 31 military and veterans associations (enclosure) with a combined membership of over 3.5 million members, is writing to express our deep concern about a budget recommendation to allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to bill a veteran's private insurance for treatment of wounds, injuries or illnesses incurred or aggravated during military service. It has been reported that such a change is actively being considered as part of the fiscal year 2010 budget package.

While we understand that the VA currently bills third-party insurance for health care unrelated to military duty, billing a third-party for service-connected treatment is just wrong. Traditionally and appropriately, the nation that calls these brave men and women to serve bears full responsibility for the cost of that care.

The VA should neither rely on subsidies from patients nor shift responsibility to third parties to cover the cost of caring for veterans when their wound, injury or illness occurs while honorably serving their country. It is the nation's responsibility to pay for this benefit, and it is up to Congress and the Administration to ensure that funding is given the priority it deserves. This obligation to the veteran should never be shirked for the sake of a budget trade-off, particularly when we are at war.

The National Military and Veterans Alliance strongly opposes any effort to shift the responsibility of this nation onto the backs of a third party or the veteran. We hope the rumors are not true and that this change will not be included with the formal budget proposal you submit to Congress next month.

Sincerely,

Deirdre M. Parke-Holloman

Co-Director

Richard A. Jones

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- American Logistics Association
- American Military Retirees Association
- American Military Society
- American Retirees Association
- American WWII Orphans Network
- AMVETS (American Veterans)
- Armed Forces Marketing Council
- Army Navy Union
- Catholic War Veterans
- Gold Star Wives of America
- Japanese American Veterans Association
- Korean War Veterans Foundation
- Legion of Valor
- Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Military Order of Foreign Wars
- Military Order of the World Wars

- National Association for Uniformed Services
- National Gulf War Resource Center
- Naval Enlisted Reserve Association
- Naval Reserve Association
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Reserve Enlisted Association
- Reserve Officers Association
- Society of Military Widows
- The Retired Enlisted Association
- TREA Senior Citizen League
- Tragedy Assistant Program for Survivors
- Uniformed Services Disabled Retirees
- Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- Women in Search of Equity