

Ensuring that veterans continue to receive the healthcare promised

Written by By Carolie Watkins Guest Columnist
Friday, 29 January 2016 07:02

Congressional Research Service, which provides analysis for Congress, issued a 2003 report that found veterans were not entitled to free medical care for life, even though they may have been promised exactly that by their recruiters.

Since 1956, veterans and their families can be treated at military medical facilities “subject to the availability of space and facilities and the capabilities of the medical and dental staff,” the report found.

“They have no right to military health care and the military services have total discretion in when and under what circumstances retirees and their dependents will get care in military treatment facilities,” the report said.

Several veterans have taken their claims to court, alleging that recruiters promised them free medical care, but one court ruled that such promises did not constitute a contract, the report said.

Moreover, since recruiters do not have the authority to make such promises, there is no way to enforce them, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled in 2002. The Supreme Court later refused to hear the case, ending the matter.

“The courts, and other analysts, have noted that allowing these claims to create such an obligation would thwart the Constitutional role of Congress (i.e., prevent the Congress from determining the compensation and benefits of the armed forces) and create a situation wherein military personnel/retirees (and potentially all other federal employees) could create or expand their own benefits with popular myth or rumor and without review,” the CRS report found.

According to the VA **website**: “The number of Veterans who can be enrolled in the health care program is determined by the amount of money Congress gives VA each year. Since funds are limited, VA set up Priority Groups to make sure that certain groups of Veterans are able to be enrolled before others.... Based on eligibility and income, some Veterans may have to agree to pay [a] copay to be placed in certain Priority Groups and some Veterans may not be eligible for enrollment.”

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In March 2014, VA eliminated the annual requirement for updated financial information. VA now uses information from the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration to automatically match individual Veterans' income information which reduces the burden on Veterans to keep their healthcare eligibility up to date. That change better aligned VA's health care financial assessment program with other federal health care organizations.

Questioned where did VA get the right to access personal private tax records, response: "It was in Obamacare Act" How can an Act for medical care take away American private information. It also gives the right to access spouse's income information. NSA is nothing compared to VA!

The Department of Veterans Affairs is updating the way it determines eligibility for VA health care, a change that will result in more Veterans having access to the health care benefits they've earned and deserve.

Effective 2015, VA eliminated the use of net worth as a determining factor for both health care programs and co-payment responsibilities. This change makes VA health care benefits more accessible to lower-income Veterans and brings VA policies in line with Secretary Bob McDonald's MyVA initiative which reorients VA around Veterans' needs. (Posted on Tuesday, March 17, 2015 12:41 pm, Posted in News Releases, Top Stories by Tim Hudak, WA)

Now, many Vietnam era veterans are approaching 70 years old and they are still excluded unless they qualify for "VA welfare." This is insulting and demeaning since the American people, through their elected representatives, promised veterans free VA health care regardless of income or other qualifications.

This violates the terms that were in place during their service since Congress mandated that all veterans would be eligible for free VA health care. According to Vietnam era Veterans, "Making this disgraceful condition even more painful is the fact that many reservists from this same timeframe, who did not serve full time, are fully eligible for medical benefits because their stateside reserve units «signed them up.» How can any full-time military member serving from 1966-1973 be denied medical assistance when others who served in a temporary role, here in the United States, for only six months, are given coverage? Talk about a «donut hole.»

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9/11 first responders are being treated in the same fashion, they were given ten-year insurance guaranty and now as they age they face the same issues as Veterans. How can we the USA, the greatest nation on earth do this to those who gave and give so much? While we send millions to other nations that try to kill and defeat us? God's predictions are coming true as he says he will take care of his children and destroy those who try to hurt them. This makes our Countries problems predicted and only the righteous can change it. We need to make our representatives in Washington righteous again.