

**NOTE TO REPORTERS: VETERANS CONCERNS ADDRESSED IN HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION**

**From: Press Office of Energy and Commerce Committee**

**Date: Friday, July 31, 2009**

Several veterans' organization wrote to Speaker Pelosi yesterday raising concerns that H.R. 3200, America's Affordable Health Choices Act, would limit care to veterans. We are writing to say that these concerns are already addressed in the legislative language and with amendments accepted during our Committee's markup (Buyer).

Specifically, veterans' health care will not be impacted by the House legislation. Section 202 (d)2(E) and (F) of the bill states that "members of the armed forces and dependents (including TRICARE) and those who receive VA care will be considered as having acceptable minimum coverage – in other words, veterans will not subject to the 2.5% penalty if they are enrolled in TRICARE or VA care.

The Energy and Commerce Committee also accepted amendments by Rep. Steve Buyer (R-IN) during the markup of the legislation to further clarify that those who participate in the VA system will be exempt from the requirements of the legislation.

In addition, addressing another concern from the veterans' groups, family members of veterans who do not have health insurance coverage will be eligible to find appropriate coverage through the exchange, just as all other qualified Americans.

Finally, since TRICARE and VA care are exempted from our legislation, no other government agency will be able to infringe on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' authority over the TRICARE program.

As this process moves forward, we look forward to working with these groups to ensure their concerns are properly addressed.