



T H E M I L I T A R Y C O A L I T I O N

201 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 838-8113

July 7, 2008

The Honorable Daniel Akaka
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Akaka:

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of nationally prominent uniformed service and veterans organizations representing more than 5.5 million active duty, Guard, Reserve, retired and former servicemembers plus their families and survivors, is writing to urge you to take prompt action to reverse the 10.6% reduction in the Medicare and military TRICARE physician payment rates that went into affect July 1, 2008 and the further 5.4% cut planned for January 2009.

The Coalition is extremely disappointed that Congress failed to approve corrective legislation that could be signed into law before the Independence Day recess. Now, only a temporary administrative delay in implementing the July 1 rate reduction is preventing major administrative problems for both providers and Medicare and a major threat to military and elderly beneficiaries' health care access.

This is particularly problematic for over 2 million TRICARE Standard and 65,000 TRICARE Reserve Select users, including Guard and Reserve families, retirees, and survivors who live in areas where there isn't a large military population or military hospital. Further, hundreds of thousands of Medicare patients enrolled in physical, speech, or occupational therapy are at risk of having that treatment cut off immediately unless restrictions that went into effect July 1 are lifted.

Republicans, Democrats, the Senate, the House, and the Administration may have some differences over the details of a fix or the specifics of funding sources, but it is long past time to resolve those differences and get a fix into law immediately.

Congress simply must put military and Medicare beneficiaries' health care access above political and partisan concerns and ensure this vital issue receives urgent and immediate action.

Sincerely,

The Military Coalition
(Signatures enclosed)

Air Force Association
Air Force Sergeants Association
Air Force Women Officers Associated
American Logistics Association
AMVETS (American Veterans)
Army Aviation Association of America
Association of Military Surgeons of the United States
Association of the United States Army
Chief Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer Association, U.S. Coast Guard
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc.
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States
Fleet Reserve Association
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America
Marine Corps League
Marine Corps Reserve Association
Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America
Military Officers Association of America
Military Order of the Purple Heart
National Association for Uniformed Services
National Guard Association of the United States
National Military Family Association
National Order of Battlefield Commissions
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association
Naval Reserve Association
Non Commissioned Officers Association
Reserve Officers Association
Society of Medical Consultants to the Armed Forces
The Retired Enlisted Association
United States Army Warrant Officers Association
United States Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States