



Resolution 19-4

For

MNGEA / EANGUS Resolutions Process

Date: 22 April 2019

POC Making Input (name, e-mail, phone):

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Chapter/Area: 1 / 10

PASSED

Category (Joint, ARNG, ANG): Joint

Type Resolution – reintroduction of 17-1

Relating To – Inclusion of Chiropractic care and Acupuncture into Tricare plans

Background –

Following decades of inaction and neglect on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the process of integrating chiropractic care into the VA health care delivery system was initiated during the past decade, but only after Congress enacted a series of statutes (Including PL 107-135 and PL 108-170) that included specific directives instructing the VA to hire doctors of chiropractic and place them at VA health care facilities. Prior to the intervention of Congress, no doctors of chiropractic served on the staff of any VA treatment facility and the availability of the services delivered by doctors of chiropractic for eligible veterans was limited to VA “referrals” to those doctors serving in private practice outside of the VA system. Such referrals were so rarely provided, that as a practical matter, it would be fair to say that access to the services provided by doctors of chiropractic within the VA system was virtually nonexistent until Congress took action to address that glaring deficiency. As a result of the previous referenced congressional directives, including recommendations issued by a congressionally-mandated advisory committee, the VA (as of early 2015) currently provides access to a Doctor of Chiropractic at just over 50 major VA treatment facilities within the U.S.

Despite the above progress, the overwhelming majority of America’s eligible veterans continue to be denied access to chiropractic care, because the VA has failed to take any significant action to provide chiropractic care at nearly 100 additional major VA treatment facilities that comprise the major sites where VA care is offered. The VA has no doctors of chiropractic on staff at these locations and referrals to doctors of chiropractic care outside of VA’s system are rarely provided at these and other location. Virtually all major VA service organizations have formally testified in support of enacting new legislation to correct this deficiency.

The disparity has been allowed to continue, despite important data demonstrating a critical need within the VA for the specific type of health care doctors of chiropractic specialize in providing. Past Department of Veterans Affairs data (Analysis of VA Health Care Utilization Among Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Veterans) cite “diseases of Musculoskeletal System/Connective System,” such as back pain, as the number one ailment of Iraq/Afghanistan veterans accessing VA treatment.

Recently, the Joint Commission an independent non-profit organization that certifies more than 20,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, including every major hospital, revised its pain management standard to include chiropractic services.

Clinical experts in pain management who provide input to the Commission's standards affirmed that treatment strategies may consider both pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic approaches. Services provided by doctors of chiropractic (who were recognized in 2009 as "physicians" by the Commission are now included in the standard of care for pain management, effective January 2015. The joint treatment plan offered by DCs is a non-pharmacologic approach to pain management. The Joint Commission standard advises facilities, when considering the use of medications to treat pain, to weigh both the benefits to the patient, as well as the potential risks of dependency, addiction, and abuse of opioids.

In 2015 the Senate passed S. 1203, the 21st Century Veterans Benefits Delivery Act, which contains a provision that phases-in the services of doctors of chiropractic at more VA major medical facilities over several years and codifies chiropractic as a standard benefit for veterans accessing VA care.

In the House of Representatives, Rep. Alan Grayson (D-FL) has introduced a bill, HR 1170, the Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act, which mirrors the chiropractic provision found in S. 1203 (see above). Co-sponsorship of HR 1170 is requested.

Proposed Recommendation -

Members of the House of Representatives are urged to show support for chiropractic services in the VA by sponsoring/cosponsoring a House bill and working for the passage of Senate bill in the 116th Congress.

Resolution #: 19-4 Date Rec'd: _____ Disposition: recommend adoption