

From: "Rep. Bob Etheridge" <nc02ima@mail.house.gov>
To: <dkanning@windstream.net>
Subject: Response from Congressman Bob Etheridge
Date: Tue, 9 Mar 2010 14:31:37 -0500

<<http://www.house.gov/etheridge>>

Dear Mr. Kanning:

Thank you for contacting me regarding Tricare benefits. It was good to hear from you, and I appreciate your taking the time to share your views with me.

Like you I support efforts to provide our military retirees with the best health care possible. H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act, will build on our commitment to military health care. Nothing in the bill would affect, change, or undermine the health care that veterans enrolled in VA health care and military families enrolled in Tricare are currently receiving. Those who are covered by Tricare or veteran's health care would automatically meet the shared responsibility requirement for individuals to have insurance, thereby exempting such members of the uniformed services and dependants from any need to change plans. At the request of veterans' organizations, the House-passed bill also allows veterans receiving VA health care or service members and their families receiving Tricare to also enroll in an insurance plan through the bill's Health Insurance Exchange. Under the legislation, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense retain full authority to operate the VA health care system and Tricare without interference from the Health Choices Administration or other agencies established by the legislation.

On November 7, 2009, I voted in favor of H.R. 3962, and the bill passed the United States House of Representatives by a vote of 220 to 215. H.R. 3962 builds on the current system of employer-sponsored insurance so that people who like their current coverage do not have to change their policies and doctors, when they change jobs. H.R. 3962 will expand patient choice - the choice of insurance coverage and the choice of doctors - while also ensuring that all Americans can afford to get insurance. H.R. 3962 will provide Americans with health insurance security and stability by making it against the law to deny coverage for preexisting conditions, placing a cap on what insurers can force Americans to pay in out-of-pocket expenses, and preventing insurers from avoiding payment through lifetime limits or other loopholes. Finally, H.R. 3962 will improve Medicare benefits for seniors to reduce costs for medications and eliminate copayments for preventive doctor visits. The bill now awaits consideration in the U.S. Senate, and you can be sure I will keep your thoughts in mind as Congress continues its work on legislation to improve our health care system for all Americans.

I am working with my colleagues in Congress and the Administration to respond to the challenges that face our nation. Together, we will build a stronger economy, find common sense solutions to our energy needs, make sure every child gets a quality education, and expand access to health care for all Americans. It is an honor to represent you in Congress, and I welcome your continued input.

Sincerely,
<<http://etheridge.house.gov/UploadedFiles/EtheridgeSignature.jpg>>
Bob Etheridge
Member of Congress