

HEALTH CARE REFORM FOR SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Our country relies on the courage and heroism of our nation's veterans, and we owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude. Senator Leahy has made it one of his most important responsibilities as a U.S. Senator to ensure that the brave members of our Armed Services receive the benefits, support, and acknowledgement they deserve. The Affordable Care Act reaffirms this commitment to supporting our veterans and makes improvements for all service members, veterans, and their families.

Protecting Access to Current Health Care

- The Affordable Care Act will not negatively impact VA health care. Veterans eligible for VA health care will remain eligible under health reform, and nothing in the legislation will affect veterans' access to the care that they currently receive.
- The legislation makes clear that the Department of Veterans Affairs will retain full authority over the VA health care system.
- The Affordable Care Act will not affect TRICARE or TRICARE for Life. No provision in the legislation would lead to increases in co-pays, changes in eligibility requirements, or in any way modify how TRICARE is administered. The Department of Defense will maintain sole authority to operate TRICARE.
- The Affordable Care Act clarifies that those covered by VA health care, TRICARE, or TRICARE for Life meet the individual responsibility requirement, and therefore exempts veterans and service members and their dependents from any penalty.

Offering Greater Flexibility, Choice, and Expanded Coverage

- Health care reform provides additional high-quality and affordable care choices for veterans. The legislation allows veterans receiving VA health care to also enroll in an insurance plan through the bill's health insurance exchanges.
- Health care reform legislation does not require anyone to change their health insurance coverage but does ensure increased health insurance options as well as expanded consumer protections to prevent insurance companies from denying or setting limits on coverage.
- According to the VA, there are 23.8 million living veterans but only 7.84 million enrollees in the VA health care system, leaving about 15.96 million veterans not enrolled in the VA Health System. Through provisions included in the Affordable Care Act, many of these uninsured veterans will have access to premium tax credits, cost sharing reductions, and coverage through health insurance exchanges.

To learn more about the Affordable Care Act please visit www.healthcare.gov or Leahy.senate.gov.