

Report Shows Pentagon Fudged TRICARE Numbers

VFW is fighting any increases to health care premiums

Aug 10, 2012

The Washington Post [reported](#) this week that the Department of Defense has requested nearly \$3 billion over the last three years be moved from funds dedicated to TRICARE into weapons programs and other accounts unrelated to healthcare, despite assurances from Pentagon officials that healthcare costs were "eating the U.S. military alive."

According to a report on the FY2013 Defense Appropriations Act provided by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, the Pentagon reprogrammed \$1.36 billion dollars from TRICARE in fiscal year 2011, \$772 million in fiscal year 2010, and requested an additional \$708 million to reprogram from this year's budget.

This reprogramming has been happening at a time that the VFW has worked tirelessly to prevent the Pentagon from arbitrarily raising TRICARE copayments, adding and expanding fees, and tying increases to medical inflation; while retiree health costs are rising at an average rate of 2.6 percent.

"The VFW is adamant that the Pentagon must not be allowed to pull this bait-and-switch on Congress and TRICARE beneficiaries," said VFW Executive Director Bob Wallace. "Instead, the Pentagon must improve its budget and management controls so Congress can have an accurate view of the fiscal situation within TRICARE and the entire Military Health System before shifting responsibility to those who choose to wear the uniform to pay for their own health care."

Your VFW has been one of the few veterans' organizations in Washington fighting to prevent any increases in military health care premiums, encouraging Washington bureaucrats to do the hard work of generating a more cost-effective military, without jeopardizing the welfare of military families and breaking faith with military retirees.

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VFW advocacy efforts earlier this year [successfully fought off](#) TRICARE fee increases, and in light of this recent report, the VFW intends only to ratchet up the pressure.

To make your voice heard on TRICARE fees, [click here](#), and check back regularly with this blog for updates.

To read the full Senate report, [click here](#). Details on health care reprogramming can be found on p. 228.