



THREAT: Lock out or increase fees for Department of Veterans Affairs Priority Groups 7 and 8 veterans.

SITUATION: Some in Congress want veterans in lower health care priority groups – groups 7 and 8 – to pay increased fees for access to VA health care. Others want to exclude lower priority groups altogether in an effort to cut costs.

VFW POSITION:

- To deny or limit VA health care to certain veterans breaks the promise made to care for them after their military service has ended, which is why Congress must reject any proposal that would deny VA care and services to veterans.
- High-quality care is achieved by providing a full continuum of health care options for veterans beyond service-connected conditions. Priority Groups 7 and 8 provide the patient base needed to achieve that quality continuum of care.
- Priority Group 7 veterans have already been deemed low income. Charging additional fees only hinders their access to the quality health care they have earned through their honorable service.
- Charging fees to certain veterans may discourage veterans from all priority groups from using VA as their health care of choice.
- Charging higher fees or co-pays at a time when thousands of men and women are sacrificing so much to defend our freedom absolutely sends the wrong message to those currently in uniform.
- VA has other options to offset the costs of offering quality low-cost health care to all veterans, such as streamlining third party billing of private insurance companies for non-service-connected conditions. Revenue should be increased by improving billing practices, not by charging veterans.