

**THREAT:** Increase pharmaceutical fees for troops, families and retirees

**SITUATION:** Congress is moving to increase TRICARE retail prescription co-pays for all TRICARE beneficiaries – including active duty military members and their families. For prescriptions filled at retail pharmacies, co-payments would be increased by \$2 to \$3 per prescription this year.

**VFW POSITION:**

- The VFW is strongly opposed to any TRICARE pharmacy increases.
- Increases for active-duty families to purchase emergency medicines through a retail pharmacy are especially objectionable.
- Local pharmacies are a critical access point to healthcare for many. Visiting a pharmacy for emergency or chronic conditions ensures access to in-person consultation and advice from a medical professional for basic questions without a costly appointment.
- VA and DOD drug expenditures have risen in recent years, but no more so than the civilian sector. Military personnel and retirees should not be forced to pay more because the government is failing to address this nationwide problem.
- We do not believe that proposals seeking to shift costs should be considered before all efforts to reduce overhead and inefficiency have been given an opportunity to succeed.
- Congress is moving forward with both efficiency initiatives and co-pay increases at the same time, and we believe this indicates a lack of commitment to ensuring the best possible value for those who serve in uniform.