

# Chiropractic Legislation Introduced In New Congress

Specific pro-chiropractic initiatives are starting to be introduced into the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress that convened in January, with TRICARE chiropractic benefits and expanded chiropractic services within the Department of Veterans Affairs leading the way.

On January 13, 2009, Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL) re-introduced legislation into the U.S. House of Representatives, HR 484, which would correct a long-overdue inequity in federal health programs by extending chiropractic health care services to U.S. military dependents and retirees through the TRICARE program. This is the third time Rep. Rogers has sponsored this important chiropractic initiative.

Titled the ***Chiropractic Health Parity for Military Beneficiaries Act***, HR 484 provides:

- *Not later than August 31, 2009, the Secretary of Defense shall complete development of a plan to provide chiropractic health care services and benefits, as a permanent part of the TRICARE program, for covered beneficiaries.*
- *The plan shall require that a contract entered into under section 1097 of title 10, United States Code, for the delivery of health care services shall—*
  - (1) Include the delivery of chiropractic services;*
  - (2) Require that chiropractic services may be provided only by a doctor of chiropractic; and*
  - (3) Provide that a covered beneficiary may select and have direct access to a doctor of chiropractic without referral by another health practitioner.*

“ICA strongly supports the extension of chiropractic benefits to TRICARE beneficiaries, who number upwards of 9 million lives,” said ICA Legislative Committee Co-Chair Dr. Michael S. McLean. “ICA also respects the care that went into crafting the exact legislative language, especially the direct access provisions.” The definitions section of the bill reads as follows:

*In this Act:*

- (1) The term ‘chiropractic services’—*
  - (A) includes diagnosis (including by diagnostic x-ray tests), evaluation and management, and therapeutic services for the treatment of a patient’s health condition, including neuromusculoskeletal conditions and the subluxation complex, and such other services determined appropriate by the Secretary and as authorized under State law; and*

*(B) does not include the use of drugs or surgery*

“We applaud Rep. Rogers’s dedication and tenacity, and call on all within the chiropractic profession to support this historic effort by immediately contacting their US House Member and ask them to join as a co-sponsor of this bill,” said Dr. McLean.

The current co-sponsors list included the following House Members:

Rep. Roscoe Bartlett [R-MD]  
Rep. Robert Aderholt [R-AL]  
Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee [D-TX]  
Rep. Ronald Paul [R-TX]  
Rep. Neil Abercrombie [D-OH]  
Rep. Steve Israel [D-NY]  
Rep. Frank LoBiondo [R-NJ]  
Rep. Robert Brady [D-PA]  
Rep. Leonard Boswell [D-IA]  
Rep. Spencer Bachus [R-AL]

### **Veterans Initiative Introduced by Chiropractic Champion Rep. Bob Filner**

On February 12, California Representative Bob Filner, perhaps chiropractic’s most dedicated champion in the US House of Representatives, introduced HR 1017, legislation to “to require the provision of chiropractic care and services to veterans at all Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and to expand access to such care and services.” The bill sets a deadline of December 31, 2012 for full inclusion of chiropractic services at all DVA facilities, and includes, “periodic and preventative chiropractic examinations and services” in the list of chiropractic benefits available to eligible veterans.



ICA Legislative Committee Co-Chair Dr. Michael S. McLean at ICA’s 2008 Legislative Work Day in Washington, DC.

“This legislation represents a critical frontier for the veteran and the chiropractic profession alike,” said Dr. McLean. “Every doctor of chiropractic in the United States needs to make the passage of this bill a top priority and personally act today to get their US House of Representatives Member to sign on as a co-sponsor.” Dr. McLean served as a member of the Chiropractic Veterans Advisory Committee established by Congress to assist in the effective implementation of chiropractic

benefits in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Filner, who represents California's 51<sup>st</sup> Congressional District, has introduced similar legislation in the last two Congresses. Now serving his ninth term in Congress, one of Rep. Filner's early appointments upon arriving in Washington was to a seat on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. In that capacity he has been a tireless fighter for veterans, winning the praise of thousands of veterans and high accolades from national veterans' organizations and health care groups including the chiropractic profession. Now serving as Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, Rep. Filner is doing all he can to support a better chiropractic program for veterans with HR 1017 and other initiatives.

Mr. Filner's dedication to America's veterans is profound and paramount in his public policy objectives. As he has regularly proclaimed in his public statements, "There are few principles more important to me than ensuring that our veterans receive the honor and dedicated care that their courage and bravery demand. Owing to that solemn duty, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is dedicated to improving health care and benefits for our veterans."

ICA urges all doctors of chiropractic, students, and citizens concerned about fairness in US health care programs to contact their Member of Congress to urge their support for HR 484 and HR 1017 as a co-sponsor. To facilitate your identifying your US House of Representatives Member, please go to the link shown below. This is the official site of the US House and they have a Member finder feature that allows you to enter in your zip code, and the name of your House Member will appear. House seats are apportioned according to population and thus the larger states have more members.

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

Passage of HR 484 and HR 1017 will be a key objectives of the May 14, 2009 Washington DC Legislative Day. For more information on this important legislative action event watch ICA's website at [www.chiropractic.org](http://www.chiropractic.org).