



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR UNIFORMED SERVICES®
5535 Hempstead Way • Springfield, VA 22151-4094
email: naus@naus.org • website: www.naus.org
Tel: 703-750-1342 Toll Free: 1-800-842-3451 • Fax 703-354-4380
"The Servicemember's Voice in Government"
Established 1968



***** NEWS RELEASE *****

Congress Makes it Official: No TRICARE Fee Hikes for 2009

SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA (10/02/08) – Military retirees and active duty servicemembers won another huge legislative victory this week as Congress just said no to drastic increases in TRICARE fees and copayments, and rejected establishment of new fees for TRICARE For Life and TRICARE Standard beneficiaries in the fiscal year 2009 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The proposed increases and new fees, including increased prescription drug copayments for active duty dependents who purchase medications at retail pharmacies, and doubling or even tripling of some TRICARE out-of-pocket costs for retirees, were being pushed for by the Pentagon, following the report of its own handpicked Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care.

The President of the National Association for Uniformed Services® (NAUS), MG Bill Matz, USA (Ret), along with NAUS Legislative Director Rick Jones, held firm to a member-supported position that any unwarranted increases in TRICARE costs violated the promises made to those who spend a career in uniformed service. "Servicemembers have already paid a higher premium for their health care in the form of a career of sacrifice and service to country, often under arduous conditions," said Matz. "I'm disappointed that the Administration fails to understand this, especially during a time of war, but am pleased by Congress' action to protect this important benefit by rejecting TRICARE cost increase every year for the past three years," he added.

"This is a clear victory for our uniformed servicemembers and retirees," said Jones, who had testified against TRICARE fee increases on Capitol Hill several times in the spring and summer leading up to passage of the NDAA. "Even as the resolve of some other military and veterans organizations has begun to crumble under the constant pressure by the Pentagon to unfairly increase these costs, the NAUS position against any TRICARE cost increases has once again been vindicated by our elected officials," he added.

The fight against TRICARE fee increases will resume next year, as the Defense Department continues to use the report of its Task Force as the blueprint for shifting more of the costs of the military healthcare system to its beneficiaries, particularly retirees. "NAUS is sticking to our guns, and we're ready to fight this issue again," said Matz. "Our members, all of our retirees, and those serving today deserve and need a strong advocate on their behalf."

NAUS is a nonprofit, non-partisan association dedicated to protecting the interests of - and benefits earned by - members of the uniformed services for themselves, their families and survivors. NAUS provides administrative support to the Society of Military Widows. For more information please contact Steve Hein, Director of Marketing, at 703-750-1342, x1009, or at shein@naus.org, or visit the Association's web site at www.naus.org.

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