

GENE TAYLOR  
4TH DISTRICT, MISSISSIPPI

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2404**

January 30, 2006

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Mr. Floyd Sears  
6733 Riviera Drive  
Biloxi, MS 39532-9348

Dear Floyd:

Thank you for expressing your concerns about recent reports that the Department of Defense (DOD) is considering a proposal to significantly increase TRICARE costs for military retirees and their families. I always appreciate it when South Mississippians take the time to contact me about issues that are important to them.

First of all, please forgive the delay in my response to you. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, my staff and I have appropriately made providing assistance to the victims of the storm and the passage of relief legislation our primary focus. While it is my standard office policy to provide a prompt and meaningful response to constituents who contact me, we have received so many requests for assistance related to this catastrophe that it has made it very difficult to reply to you as quickly as I would like. Be assured that your concerns are very important to me, and I am grateful for your patience during this challenging time.

While no formal details are yet available from DOD on this proposal, according to press accounts, Assistant Secretary of Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Dr. William Winkenwerder unveiled the cost increases at a meeting with representatives of The Military Coalition on January 11, 2006. Focused primarily at all retirees under age 65 and their dependents, the DOD proposal reportedly recommends the following changes to TRICARE:

- Implements enrollment fees for TRICARE Standard. For officers, fees start at \$150/\$300 (individual/family) and rise to \$225/\$450 by October 2007 and to \$300/\$600 in 2008. For enlisted retirees, fees start at \$100/\$200 (individual/family) and rise to \$175/\$350 by October 2007 and to \$200/\$400 in 2008.
- Increases enrollment fees for TRICARE Prime (now \$230/\$460) would be raised for retired officers to \$400/\$800 (individual/family) next October, to \$600/\$1200 a year later and to \$750/\$1500 by October 2008, the start of fiscal 2009. Enlisted retirees under 65 would see Prime enrollment fees climb to \$300/\$600 next October, to \$375/\$750 a year later and to \$450/\$900 in 2008.
- Increases annual deductibles under TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra (now \$150/\$300) would climb for retired officers to \$200/\$400 and to \$250/\$500 in October