May 28, 2020

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Chairman  
House Armed Services Committee  
Washington, D.C.  20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee  
Washington, D.C.  20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Thornberry:

As the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) discussions begin, we write in support of language to prohibit the planned downsizing of military hospitals and clinics. The restructuring of Military Treatment Facilities (MTF) was included in the FY17 NDAA and medical billet cuts were proposed in the FY21 Department of Defense (DoD) budget. These cuts were based on military medical end strength requirements conducted before the coronavirus emergency. The COVID-19 pandemic demands that medical readiness requirements be reassessed and updated with lessons learned based on our nation’s response to the coronavirus emergency. And, we believe one of the lessons learned is that there will be future public health emergencies that strain the civilian system and we have an obligation to adequately provide for MTF’s and medical billets within the Department of Defense.

Even before the COVID-19 emergency, we had concerns about downsizing the MTFs. Specifically, our constituents raised concerns about how the civilian community will absorb new patients with TRICARE. As the NDAA requires, the Defense Health Agency needs to complete a review on how proposed reductions in care facilities will affect beneficiaries. This review should be completed before there is a reduction in medical billets or reduction in MTFs.

The civilian medical system is strained to capacity and is being augmented with Department of Defense (DoD) medical personnel. Now is not the time to reduce MTFs and medical billets. Instead, the DoD should re-evaluate medical readiness requirements to ensure sufficient reserve capacity to meet the current and any future crisis without jeopardizing health care for military beneficiaries and their families who rely on uniformed providers who understand their unique needs.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and your commitment to providing the medical resources necessary for our civilian medical system and military families.

Sincerely,

Bill Posey  
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress
Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress

Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress

Blaine Luetkemeyer
Member of Congress

Ross Spano
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M.
Member of Congress

Al Lawson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress
Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Fred Keller  
Member of Congress

Scott Perry  
Member of Congress