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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515

<http://veterans.house.gov>

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Close a Loophole in VA Funding!

Dear Colleague:

Please join with me in closing an unfair statutory loophole that prohibits veterans from using their Medicare benefits at VA facilities. Today, there are veterans who have earned VA health care benefits with their service to our country, as well as Medicare benefits by contributing to the Medicare program during their working years. Clearly, these individuals have earned both of these benefits and should not have any exclusions placed on the use of these benefits.

While the VA is allowed to bill private healthcare insurers for the treatment of veterans' non-service-connected conditions, current law prohibits the billing of Medicare. This means that elderly veterans are unable to enjoy their Medicare benefits at VA health care facilities, even though they may prefer to receive care among their fellow veterans. As for those veterans who choose to use their VA health benefits, they are, in essence, foregoing the hard-earned dollars that they contributed towards Medicare benefits during their working years.

The Medicare VA Reimbursement Act of 2009, H.R. 3365, would seal shut this loophole by requiring the Secretaries of VA and HHS to collaborate to develop a program allowing VA to bill Medicare for services rendered to veterans enrolled in Medicare Part A or B. Moreover, an annual report to Congress and a triennial GAO report will help ensure that the program is properly tailored and implemented. This legislation not only provides veterans with the choice of using their rightfully earned benefits, it also would give the VA access to new revenues to further enhance the VA healthcare system.

If you would like further information or to sign on as a co-sponsor of this important piece of legislation, please contact Jeff Burdette on my staff. He may be reached at (202) 225-9154 or jeff.burdette@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

BOB FILNER
 Chairman