

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

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



W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



David Trone
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress



Joe Cunningham
Member of Congress



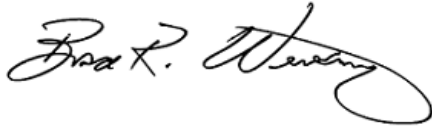
David Rouzer
Member of Congress



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



Ross Spano
Member of Congress



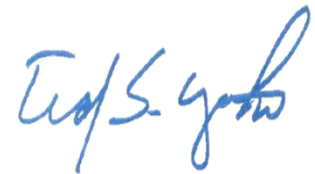
Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.
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Lisa Blunt Rochester
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Wm. Lacy Clay
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Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M.
Member of Congress



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Al Lawson, Jr.
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Blaine Luetkemeyer
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Jaime Herrera Beutler
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Derek Kilmer
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Fred Keller
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Sheila Jackson Lee
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Scott Perry
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