



VIPMOAA

NEWSLETTER



WEBSITE:
<http://www.VIPMOAA.org>

EMAIL:
peninsulamooaa@gmail.com

VOLUME XXXVI *NO. 5

Published monthly, except July, by VIPMOAA.

MAY 2011



PREZ SEZ

"I am only one; but still I am one.
 I cannot do everything, but still
 I can do something.
 I will not refuse to do the something
 I can do." *Helen Keller*



I think it fair to say that no one knows for certain what lies in store regarding future TRICARE fee increases, but I think we all can agree that it is a worrisome prospect in light of continued austere budgets and Pentagon thinking regarding increased military health care costs. One article that I recently read drove home, to me, the need for organizations like MOAA to remain vigilant and continue our efforts to protect our health care benefits through interaction with our elected Congressional representatives. The article I am talking about was published by the National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS) and related a mid-March 2011 statement on the subject by a DOD spokeswoman. It is quite revealing and I would like to share it with you.

The lead-in stated "Pentagon Blames TRICARE for Life Benefit for Steep Increases in Military Health Care." In response to NAUS testimony accusing the Department of manipulating military health care data in order to blame military retirees for rising health care costs and asking Congress to "hold the line" against fee increases, DOD spokeswoman Cynthia Smith disclosed the Department's plan to assert that TRICARE for Life (TFL) was one of the biggest factors contributing to growing costs for military health care. Smith continued that the problem is introduction of the TFL benefit for elderly retirees. She asserted a second large factor for increasing expenses is that "working age" military retirees actually use the benefit they earned (yep, she said that) as a result of a 20-year career in the uniformed services. So, according to Smith, **rising costs result from the earned benefit being used!**

Smith continued it is not that "working age" military retirees pay too little a share in enrollment fees but, rather, it is the fact that those who have earned the benefit actually use it. One then wonders why the Pentagon package calls for a 13 percent increase in "working age" TRICARE Prime fees when they tout the problem is far more simple --- those who have earned the benefit are using it. Puzzling then is the fact that neither of the factors DOD cites as breaking the TRICARE bank – TRICARE for Life or "Working Age" Use of the Earned Benefit –are part of the current Pentagon plan for TRICARE fee increases.

As NAUS pointed out, clearly DOD has more in mind. Fee increases may seem modest at first look, but their belief is that the intent is to divide the voice of retirees and start the roll-out for substantial increases in TRICARE fees and copays beyond TRICARE Prime. MOAA is in the fight with NAUS and other veterans services organizations in The Military Coalition and we at the chapter level must also do our part to protect earned benefits or risk losing some of them.

Finally, let me direct your attention to a **letter from your Newsletter Editor of the past two years**, outlined on page 3 of this Newsletter, which states lamentable news for this chapter and all of us who know her personally. **Mary-Hunter Devlin has done an excellent job as our newsletter editor** and we will sorely miss her expertise and attention to detail. She has eloquently outlined her reasons for resignation and made her plea for someone else to step up to take her place. **I echo her sentiments and eagerly await a volunteer to take on this essential task for OUR chapter.** If you, or someone you know, would be willing to take on this position, please let me know or give me a name to contact. And, god-speed to Mary-Hunter.

Frank Duckett, Major, USAF (Ret), President. (757) 253-1824; fduckett@cox.net

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	Contacts
3	Membership, ROTC, Letter From Editor
4	The Legislative Buzz: 2012 proposed state Objectives
5	Legislative Continued: DVS & VA VET
6	Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC)
7	Active State & Local
8	Auxiliary Liaisons
9	Please Help & Williamsburg Special
10	Program for June 23 Meeting
11	Hospitality for June And Future Meetings
12	Alex Kuras Honored