



★ THE TRICARE-MEDICARE PREMIUM PROBLEM ★

THE PROBLEM

Many of our military's most seriously injured retirees lose access to low cost TRICARE plans because of their injuries. These individuals should have the choice to remain on these low cost plans.



Many of the most severely wounded warriors qualify both for Medicare and for TRICARE. They earn TRICARE upon medical retirement, and they qualify early for Medicare (before age 65) if they cannot work for a sustained period of time.



Although these wounded warriors earned low cost TRICARE benefits through their service, they lose the choice to remain on these low cost plans and are required by law to purchase Medicare Part B. If they decline Part B, they lose all access to TRICARE health benefits.



What is the financial impact? Medicare Part B premiums total \$1,608 annually, whereas low cost TRICARE plans are only \$283 per year. At these rates, over the course of ten years, an injured retiree unable to work is required to pay over \$13,000 more than a typical retiree – a significant sum for someone on a fixed income.



If a wounded warrior declines Part B, losing access to TRICARE, and later wants to reverse this decision, they are subject to a late enrollment penalty of 10% – per year until they reach age 65 – on top of already higher Medicare Part B premiums.



The government has designed an extremely confusing system of health insurance coverage for Medicare-eligible retirees, many of whom are attempting to navigate the system while living with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injuries (TBI) incurred during service to our country. We owe these veterans a fair system with clear choices.

THE SOLUTION

Military retirees who qualify for Medicare because they cannot work should have the right to choose between Medicare and low cost TRICARE plans.

1

REMOVE BARRIERS

Remove existing barriers to low cost TRICARE plans for military retirees who qualify for Medicare because they cannot work.

2

PRESERVE MEDICARE ACCESS

Preserve Medicare access for those who prefer it and are able to pay the Part B premium.

3

CREATE ENROLLMENT PERIOD

Create an enrollment period through which these individuals can decide – based on their medical and financial situation – whether Medicare or TRICARE works best for them.

4

WAIVE MEDICARE LATE ENROLLMENT PERIOD

Waive the Medicare late enrollment period for this population to allow for unhindered choice of health insurance plans.

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