



NEWS

U . S . SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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CONTACT: KIM McCREERY
(202) 224-8953

DOLE INTRODUCES MEDICARE SUBVENTION BILL

WASHINGTON -- Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole today introduced legislation authorizing the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense (DOD) to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of Medicare reimbursement to DOD for treatment of military beneficiaries age 65 and older. Based on those findings, the bill enables these individuals to enroll in Tricare Prime, DOD's managed health care program, and to be treated in military hospitals.

Currently, all Medicare-eligible military retirees and family members are denied enrollment in Tricare Prime. All career military members and their families who are now enrolled will lose their eligibility for Tricare at age 65, when they become eligible for Medicare. Congressman J.C. Watts (R-OK) today introduced companion legislation in the House. Senator Dole's statement follows:

"As the defense budget tightens, DOD has a strong incentive to push older retirees and families out of the military medical system and back into Medicare, even when Medicare costs the government and retirees more money. Although Medicare-eligible retirees may use military hospitals on a space-available basis, that option is rapidly vanishing as military facilities downsize and Tricare expands across the country.

"In my view, Medicare subvention offers a sensible solution to these problems. Subvention allows Medicare to reimburse DOD for care provided to older beneficiaries enrolling in Tricare Prime, or otherwise using military hospitals. I believe that the feasibility tests authorized in this bill will prove that subvention is a practical and cost-effective program."

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