



July 24, 2018

The Honorable John McCain, Chairman
The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry, Chairman
The Honorable Adam Smith, Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen McCain and Thornberry and Ranking Members Reed and Smith:

The Tricare for Kids (TFK) Coalition, a stakeholder group of children's health care advocacy and professional organizations, disability advocacy groups, military and veterans' service organizations and military families, would like to express our views on several of the provisions in _____ the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2019 regarding their impact on the health care support and services for more than two million children of military families covered under TRICARE.

Support

Report requirement accompanying S 2897: Comptroller General study of dependency determinations for incapacitated adult children of military members

"The committee has learned about potential problems associated with dependency determinations made by the Department of Defense for incapacitated adult children. In some instances, adult children lose dependency status if they are placed in group homes or other institutional settings. In other cases, an adult child may not earn wages because those earnings would impact a dependency determination.

As a result, the committee directs the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study of the Department's policies, procedures, and processes for determining dependency status of incapacitated adult children."

The TFK Coalition brought this issue to the Committees' attention amid grave concerns regarding the loss of dependency status for adult incapacitated children among active duty and retiree families. A thorough analysis by GAO will assist families, stakeholders and policymakers in determining next steps to protect military and retiree family units.

Oppose

S 2897 Sec. 701

By removing the grandfathering protections for cost shares and catastrophic caps in these plans, Congress fuels uncertainty and fosters distrust in military families, particularly for those most vulnerable. The cumulative impact of higher copays, enrollment fees, catastrophic cap and a new non-network deductible disproportionately affects those families impacted by special needs, chronic and complex conditions, and disabilities whose annual health care costs are much higher than those for "typical" family members and will always hit caps. Section 701 also fails to address the steep copays for physical, speech, and occupational therapies, and mental health visits, a critical flaw in the new TRICARE copay construct that could potentially prevent families from following recommended treatment plans for their children.

Please protect families with chronic, complex, and special needs and disabilities by maintaining grandfathering protections for cost shares and catastrophic caps.

Coalition members would be happy to discuss these requests further at your convenience. Thank you so much for your careful consideration.

Sincerely,

Kara Tollett Oakley

Kara Tollett Oakley, Chair

cc: Conferees