



ENLISTED ASSOCIATION OF THE NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES

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TRICARE for All

The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS), representing over 440,000 Guardsmen across the 50 states, three territories, and the District of Columbia urges Congress to pass legislation to provide health care for the National Guard and all other reserve components.

Healthcare coverage is one of the top issues affecting the readiness and deployability of the National Guard. During the 118th Congress, H.R.4221, titled “Healthcare for our Troops Act”, was introduced by the now Senator Andy Kim to provide TRICARE for all members of the reserve components at no cost to the service member. The primary challenge ahead is to secure appropriations, as funding has not been allocated for this option. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that the benefits will significantly outweigh the costs.

The National Guard must maintain the same medical, physical, and individual standards as the active component but does not receive the same healthcare benefit to meet and maintain those standards. In the early 2000s, as the country demanded more from the National Guard, TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) was established to enhance service members’ readiness by offering an affordable healthcare option for them and their families. The growing need for a stronger, more prepared National Guard highlights the issue of medical readiness. While TRS provided a healthcare option, it was not an immediate or guaranteed solution.

- If a member enrolls in the TRS program, and their duty status changes, they may be automatically enrolled into TRICARE Prime. However, once their duty status reverts back and their TRICARE Prime coverage ends, there is no automatic re-enrollment. This can lead to a loss of health care coverage before TRS is reinstated.
- Annual health assessments focus on evaluating health readiness rather than providing solutions to identified problems. These evaluations may be conducted during drill weekends, which means sacrificing limited and valuable training time.
- The variety of healthcare treatments and coverage options results in health care records being scattered across several locations, such as duty stations, TDY locations, civilian providers. With no centralized tracking system, the necessary data for military service may not be requested or retained, making it extremely difficult to monitor deployable standards.

These are just some of the issues that will be addressed by passing TRICARE for all legislation. This is both an individual care issue and a readiness issue for the National Guard. We urge the 119th Congress to reintroduce this legislation and ensure its’ passage for the benefit of our service members in the National Guard.

For more information regarding this issue or any other issues concerning the National Guard, contact the EANGUS legislative team at legislative@eangus.org.