



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Chairman Phil Roe, M.D.

H.R. 1972, as amended: The VA Billing Accountability Act

Background:

On June 1, 2015, members of the Wisconsin and Minnesota delegations were notified that the Consolidated Patient Account Center (CPAC) team, operating at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, had initiated a review of past processes on veteran inpatient co-pay charges for the years 2011-2015. As part of the review, VA had uncovered 1,482 instances where veterans were either not billed at all or were under billed for inpatient services and, as a result, VA would be assessing copayments in the range of \$1,000 to \$3,000 for care the veterans had received.

Initially, these charges were added to the veteran's monthly billing statements. However, after congressional oversight, VA suspended accounts for the affected veterans and reached out to them via telephone to explain their account status and provide them the option to apply for a waiver or repayment plan. VA claimed to have six years to bring an action against a veteran and no authority to waive copayment collections.

H.R. 1973 would authorize VA to waive the requirement that a veteran make copayments for medications, hospital care, nursing home care and medical services if a VA error delayed copayment notification to the veteran or the veteran received such notification later than 180 days (18 months in the case of a community care facility) after the date the veteran received the care or services.

The Message:

- Veterans should not be financially penalized for VA's mistakes.
- This bill would bring accountability to VA's billing practices by clearly defining VA's billing responsibilities.
- This legislation waives the requirement that veterans pay a copayment if a VA error delayed their copayment notification.