



Office of U.S. Senator Mark Begich

Alaska :: April 2011

Official website :: <http://begich.senate.gov>

CAREGIVER SUPPORT: Severely Wounded Veterans and Their Families Deserve the Best Support Our Nation Can Provide

Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010, Public Law 111-163

- *Purpose*- The bill directed the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs, Erik Shinseki, to establish a program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers for veterans.
- *Veteran Qualifications*- The bill stipulated that qualifying veterans must be undergoing medical discharge from the military, have a serious injury resulting from duty on or after September 11, 2001, and be in need of personal care services.
- *Assistance Provided*- The bill authorizes services to caretakers in the form of personal care services instruction and training, ongoing technical support, counseling, and lodging and subsistence while accompanying the veteran for VA medical care. Additionally, the bill provides for additional assistance for the primary personal care provider such as mental health services, respite care, and a monthly stipend similar to that provided to commercial care givers in that region.
- *Mandates for VA Secretary*- According to the bill's provisions, the VA Secretary must designate one family member as the primary personal care provider, monitor the well-being of each veteran receiving personal care services, provide outreach to inform eligible veterans and family members of the program, and establish general caregiver support services for caregivers of enrolled veterans.
- *Additional Benefits*- The bill authorizes the VA Secretary to provide VA medical care for primary providers of personal care services who are not entitle to care or services under a health-plan contract. It also makes family caregivers of veterans eligible for VA counseling and mental health services.



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- [Link to Full Explanation of the Bill](#)

Senator Begich's Recent Actions

- *Letter to Secretary Shinseki and Director Lew* – Senator Begich signed onto a letter to Secretary Shinseki and Director Lew dated February 7, 2011. The bipartisan letter, coauthored by Chairman Murray and Ranking Member Burr, had sixteen additional cosigners. It addressed the painfully slow progress that VA has made in implementing the Act which was enacted into law on May 5, 2010. The deadline for full implementation, January 30, 2011, is rapidly approaching and Senator Begich wants to ensure that VA meets the Congressionally mandated deadline.
- [Link to PDF of Letter](#)



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