

*NEWS FROM...*

CHAIRMAN BOB FILNER

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **President Signs Veterans' Emergency Care Fairness Act**

**Washington, D.C.** – House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA) praised President Barack Obama's signing of H.R. 1377, the Veterans' Emergency Care Fairness Act of 2009. The new law expands veteran eligibility to require the VA to pay for emergency treatment for a non-service connected condition if a third-party is not responsible for paying for the full cost of care. The bill clarifies that the VA only pay the difference between the amounts paid by the third-party and the VA allowable amount, and is not responsible for copayments the veteran owes to the third party.

"Under current law, veterans are not reimbursed for medical costs when they receive emergency care from non-VA medical facilities if they have insurance that pays either full or a portion of the emergency care. This creates an inequity that penalizes veterans with third-party insurance and burdens veterans with paying the remaining amount not covered by insurance. I am pleased that President Obama signed this common sense bill into law in order to clarify the reimbursement responsibilities of the VA, so veterans can focus on their recovery, instead of being overburdened with financial concerns."

In addition to reimbursing veterans for emergency care in the future, the bill allows the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide retroactive reimbursements for care received prior to the passage of this bill. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that this legislation will cover approximately 700 future claims per year and as many as 2,000 veterans retroactively.

Chairman Filner introduced H.R. 1377 on March 6, 2009, which became Public Law 111-137 on February 1, 2010

