

THE CHIROPRACTIC CHOICE

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INTERNATIONAL CHIROPRACTORS ASSOCIATION

1110 N. Glebe Road, Suite 650
Arlington, VA 22201 USA
Phone: 703-528-5000
Fax: 703-351-7893

EMAIL:

thechiropracticchoice@chiropractic.org

ADVERTISING:

mwerner@chiropractic.org

ICA WEBSITE:

www.chiropractic.org

HR 1470 – VETERANS' LEGISLATION

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tem that any bureaucratic obstacles to access for veterans to chiropractic services will not be tolerated.

On the same day Mr. Filner also introduced HR 1471, the "Better Access to Chiropractors to Keep Our Veterans Healthy Act" (BACK Veterans Health Act), legislation that would provide for much needed direct access to chiropractic services for eligible veterans. This legislation would address the long waiting periods and the documented reluctance or outright refusal of medical doctors and physical therapists now in the gatekeeper role in the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide referrals for veterans for chiropractic care. The bill, when enacted into law would provide that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, "...shall permit eligible veterans to receive needed medical services, rehabilitative services, and preventative health services from a licensed doctor of chiropractic on a direct access basis at the election of the eligible veteran."

Both HR 1470 and 1471 have been referred to the House Committee on Veterans Affairs where Mr. Filner now serves as Committee Chairman. "America's veterans are truly fortunate to have Mr. Filner in the U.S. Congress as an advocate and an innovator," said Dr. Michael S. McLean, Co-Chair of ICA's Legislative Committee. "ICA urges every doctor of chiropractic in the United States to immediately contact their Member of Congress and urge their immediate support for HR 1470 and 1471 as co-sponsors." Mr. Filner introduced these initiatives in the last Congressional session, but they were not passed in the 109th Congress.

Rep. Filner is a longstanding and outspoken advocate of equitable access and federal funding for chiropractic services, both out of recognition of the unique and highly cost effective contri-



Rep. Bob Filner (D-Calif.)

bution chiropractic care can make to the health of citizens of all ages, as well as his own personal experience with and understanding of chiropractic. In his statement in the Congressional Record upon his introduction of the two veterans' bills, Mr. Filner stated: "I am a chiropractic patient myself and have been greatly helped by chiropractic care for physical problems caused by an automobile accident. I hate to think that veterans do not have this same opportunity for relief from pain."

"The recent scandals surrounding the sub-standard conditions and questionable care provided to wounded veterans at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and other facilities have dramatically raised the nation's consciousness in the area of the care provided to military veterans and will perhaps assist in securing the passage of these bills," said Dr. McLean.

Rep. Filner is in the vanguard of public officials seeking to make certain that such shortcomings are immediately and effectively addressed and that similar neglect is never an issue in the Department of Veterans Affairs. In his public

in the department of marketing for the Edward S. Agene School of Business at Golden Gate University since 2005, and former Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs from 1991 to 1994.

- Fred Lerner, DC, PhD, FACO, a veteran of 25 years in private practice and co-director of Integrative Medicine at the Pain Center at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

The actions of the Board in dismissing the Executive Director, along with the politically driven public hostility of the former Board Chair Barbara Stanfield have generated an unusual volume of one-sided media coverage for the Chiropractic Board. Predictably, political

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statement on this issue, Rep Filner said:

"The events reported at Walter Reed were a break in faith with our troops. We must be able to rely on the chain of command in order to address the serious problems not only at Walter Reed, but at the military facilities across the country.

My concerns are focused on how we serve our troops when they turn from the Pentagon to the VA for their healthcare. In order for our troops to experience the seamless transition they deserve, the bureaucratic problems that prevent many from getting the care they need must be fixed.

I am committed to preventing similar situations to Walter Reed from striking the VA system. Clearly, we need an oversight and inspection system that is separate from the agency that is being overseen."

Rep. Filner brings an impressive mix of achievements and qualifications to the U.S. House of Representatives, and is one of only a tiny handful of members of Congress with a scientific degree and one of only 18 members in the House holding a Ph.D. With public service at many levels of government, from the San Diego School Board to the San Diego City Council, and then Deputy Mayor of San Diego, Mr. Filner first went to Congress in 1992, representing California's 51st District.

One of Mr. Filner's early appointments upon arriving in Washington was to a seat on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. In that capacity he has been a tireless fighter for veterans, winning the praise of thousands of individual veterans and high accolades from national veterans' organizations and health care groups such as the chiropractic profession. Rep. Filner fought to call attention to and take action on health problems affecting soldiers who had served in Vietnam and the Gulf War. He has worked for more mental health care for veterans and to ensure that GI benefits keep up with inflation. He was successful in getting better pay for VA dentists and increasing small business opportunities for veterans.

Now serving his sixth term, Rep. Filner continues to focus on the critical junctures where governmental action can make a difference in the lives of the people and the health of the nation. "Long years of service have taught Congressman Filner that there are no easy solutions to the problems facing us. Nor does any one person or any one group have a monopoly on the truth," said Dr. Michael McLean. "Rep. Filner truly understands that progress comes only when people work together on a common agenda to make things better. That's what Rep. Filner believes and that's what Rep. Filner does."

CALIFORNIA BOARD

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ing the controversial and divisive Barbara Stanfield, DC, has been widely applauded as an important step in the right direction. In an additional step that has likewise been welcomed by the chiropractic profession and other objective observers, the Board's long-standing Executive Director Catherine Hayes was terminated at a Board meeting on March 21, 2007 and again affirmed at a special Board meeting on March 23rd.

In addition to his early appointments of much respected former California Superior Court Justice James Duvaras, and Franco Columbu, DC, a 1978 graduate of Cleveland Chiropractic College – Los Angeles, with a powerful record of experience and accomplishment, recent appointments by Governor Schwarzenegger include:

- Hugh Lubkin, DC, a private practitioner with 20 years of experience, a graduate of Life Chiropractic College West and the current Vice President of the International Chiropractors Association of California.
- James Conran, an adjunct professor

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