

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action:	Be Adopted
Vote:	5 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Bates, Kruse, Morrisette, Morse, Monnes Anderson
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Robert Shook, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	5/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Urges Congress to increase funding and eligibility for veterans living in rural and remote areas and to review and simplify the Fee Basis statutes and regulations regarding payment eligibility for specialty care and emergency health care.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Definition and clarification of Fee Basis contract payment system utilized to pay local health care providers outside of the Veterans Affairs health care system
- Eligibility and coverage of health care services
- Need for access to local providers of health care especially in rural areas

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Healthcare (VA) is the largest integrated health care system in the United States, providing comprehensive health care services to approximately 5.5 million U.S. veterans in 2008. Oregon's two major flagship VA hospitals, where specialty care is managed, are located in Portland and Roseburg. Veterans who live outside the urban metropolitan areas and are unable to drive over three hours to one of these two VA hospitals for specialty care rely heavily on the VA's pre-approved Fee Basis system. Governed by federal law and regulations, Fee Basis is the VA health care's contract payment system for local health care providers outside of the VA system.

Additionally, Oregon has established 10 community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) to improve health care access for rural veterans who live a significant distance from VA hospital-based care and improve care coordination by encouraging veterans' use of the VA as the primary source of health care service. However, CBOCs are restricted to primary care and limited mental health care.

House Joint Memorial 3 recognizes that Oregon veterans should receive the same level of care regardless of their place of residence. The measure urges Congress to provide more money for Fee Basis and to review and simplify the laws and regulations regarding payment eligibility for specialty care and emergency care for veterans who live in rural and remote areas.