



April 29, 2013

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Burgess:

The National Military Family Association has long been an advocate for improving the quality of life of our military family members, who have sacrificed greatly in support of our Nation. Ensuring that military families have access to quality, comprehensive medical care is among our highest priorities. Thus, our Association is pleased to support H.R. 1705, *The Rehabilitative Therapy Parity for Military Beneficiaries Act*, which would require TRICARE to cover certain non-traditional physical therapy services.

Health care providers and physical therapists know that non-traditional therapies can often be the most effective in helping patients retain and restore function. Therapists have used balls, balance boards, barrels, benches and even horses to help patients gain balance and mobility, with great success. However, TRICARE has determined that these innovative means of therapy are unproven, and therefore declines to provide coverage for these services. As a result, military family members are not able to receive these treatments – even when their health care provider has determined that they are the best way to care for the patient.

It is neither good medical practice nor cost effective for TRICARE to decline coverage for useful treatments while paying for services that don't work, but that is its current policy. Military families deserve more. They need to know that their doctor or physical therapist can prescribe the most effective treatments for them without worrying that their claims will be denied. Thank you for introducing this clarifying legislation which will ensure that the Department of Defense provides the required TRICARE benefit. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Eileen Huck, Government Relations Deputy Director at 703.931.6632 or EHuck@militaryfamily.org.

The National Military Family Association is the only national organization whose sole focus is the military family and whose goal is to influence the development and implementation of policies that will improve the lives of the families of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. For more than 40 years, its staff and volunteers, comprised mostly of military family members, have built a reputation for being the leading experts on military family issues.

Sincerely,

Mary T. Scott
Chairman, Board of Governors