



## ***ISSUE BRIEF***

### **Enact Legislation to Allow Doctors of Chiropractic to Serve as Participants in the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The US Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps is comprised of approximately 6,000+ well-trained, highly qualified public health professionals dedicated to delivering the nation's public health promotion and disease prevention programs and advancing public health science. Officers in the Corps provide health care services in a variety of locations and venues, including care to members of the U.S. Coast Guard, US prisons and at community health centers and other sites. Health professionals allowed into the Corps include: Medical physicians; dentists, nurses, pharmacists; dieticians; psychologists; social workers; physical therapists; occupational therapists; veterinarians; speech pathologists; audiologists; and others.

Despite the fact that virtually all types of health care providers are included in the Corps, no doctors of chiropractic have been allowed to be commissioned into the Corps.

This glaring deficiency persists despite the fact that doctors of chiropractic (DCs) are highly trained professionals, licensed as direct access providers in all 50 states; are defined as "physicians" under Medicare (*Section 1861(r) of the Social Security Act*); by enacted Public Laws doctors of chiropractic have been added as staff members at VA Hospitals in every region of the Department of Veterans Affairs Health System; by enacted Public Laws doctors of chiropractic provide care to active duty military personnel at major military treatment facilities; doctors of chiropractic provide care to federal employees under the Blue Cross FEHBP and other FEHBP programs; the utilization of doctors of chiropractic to provide a range of services is widespread within the private health insurance sector.

The failure to commission doctors of chiropractic into the Corps reflects, at best, bureaucratic intransigence and benign neglect – and, quite possibly, deliberate discrimination against doctors of chiropractic and the misdirected influence of competitor interests opposed to the advancement of the chiropractic profession.

#### **CURRENT ACTION:**

To remedy this glaring deficiency and to improve the USPHS Commissioned Corps, Representative Gene Green (D-Texas) a Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee has introduced HR 2202. This bill would include DCs in the Regular Corps and the Ready Reserve Corps, and would require the President, in consultation with the Surgeon General and the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, to appoint DCs to the Commissioned Corps.

(over)

**ACTION NEEDED:**

- Members of the House of Representatives are urged to co-sponsor **HR 2202** and work for its enactment within the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress.

**For Additional Information Please Contact:**

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