

Statement of  
Representative Steve Stivers  
House Committee on Armed Services: Full Committee Legislative Hearing  
April 17, 2012

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I want to thank Chairman McKeon for holding this important hearing today on the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), and for allowing Members of Congress serving outside of the House Committee on Armed Services to submit testimony on this crucial legislation. I would like to bring to the attention of the Committee, *TRICARE for Kids*, a bill that I recently introduced with my colleagues, Representative Susan Davis and Representative Robert Schilling.

Through its TRICARE program, the Department of Defense (DoD) clearly has recognized the support that military families need back home. As a Lieutenant Colonel actively serving in the Ohio Army National Guard, I have experienced firsthand the services and resources provided by TRICARE, and this legislation is an effort to help the Department and its TRICARE program develop and encourage health care practices and policies that are designed to address the specific health care needs of military children and families.

Children have dramatically different needs and standards of care than those of adults. But with a reimbursement structure that is based on Medicare, TRICARE often adopts policies and practices that do not account for pediatric health care delivery and settings. My TRICARE for Kids legislation would bring together stakeholders with a wide range of expertise from both military and non-military perspectives to perform a proactive, comprehensive analysis of the policies, practices, relationships, and resources that involve children's health and health care.

The goal of TRICARE for Kids is to better shape the policies and practices of TRICARE by accounting for the specific health care needs of children—without straining the Department of Defense and its budget. This legislation accomplishes this goal through a working group convened by the Secretary of Defense and comprised of a full spectrum of experts representing children's health care and military families. In an effort to better accomplish its goal, the legislation was drafted under the guidance of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and is estimated to have no impact on direct spending or revenues. Further, CBO has estimated that any spending would total less than \$500,000 over the life of the group.

TRICARE for Kids is a bipartisan effort to support our military families and children by ensuring they have health care that best meets their needs. Endorsed by the Military Officers Association of America, Children's Hospital Association, the American Hospital Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Military Family Association, this bill has been widely recognized as a step we can take towards improving the health of our nation's children.

Again, I appreciate the Chairman holding this hearing.