



Commemorating 40 Years Of Disability Advocacy 1973-2013

May 17, 2013

The Honorable Michael Burgess
U.S. House of Representatives
2336 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Burgess:

We the undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Veterans and Military Families Task Force are writing in support of the Rehabilitative Therapy Parity for Military Beneficiaries Act (H.R. 1705), legislation you recently introduced to ensure military families receive coverage under the TRICARE health care program for therapeutic exercises or therapeutic activities, such as hippotherapy, prescribed in a patient's individual plan of care.

CCD is a coalition of national disability rights, advocacy, consumer, and provider organizations. The Veterans and Military Families Task Force follows issues of concern to veterans with disabilities and military family members with disabilities.

The Veterans and Military Families Task Force has long advocated for increased access to essential services and supports for veterans with disabilities and military family members with disabilities. That is why we were disappointed in TRICARE's decision not to cover essential, proven and recommended physical therapies, including therapeutic exercises and activities provided on a horse, balance board, ball, bolster and bench. This legislation is an important first step in ensuring that military families are not denied coverage of rehabilitative therapies that are included in a patient's individual plan of care. Correction of this disparity is the right thing to do for our military families.

We support this legislation and other efforts to promote the well-being of military families by ensuring fair and adequate access to critical services and supports for family members with disabilities. Please let our Task Force know if we can assist you in advancing this measure through the legislative process. If you have any questions, please contact the co-chairs of the CCD Veterans and Military Families Task Force: Maynard Friesz (202-403-8345; mfriesz@easterseals.com); Heather Ansley (202-556-2076, Ext. 7702; hansley@vetsfirst.org); or Susan Prokop (202-416-7707; susanp@pva.org).

Sincerely,

American Association on Health and Disability
American Physical Therapy Association
Brain Injury Association of America
Easter Seals
Epilepsy Foundation
Mental Health America
National Council on Independent Living
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization on Disability
Paralyzed Veterans of America
VetsFirst, a program of United Spinal Association