

Note from AFA President – AFA Member Issues

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

AFA Members, I'd like to call your attention to three important matters

### **MEMBER GET A MEMBER CAMPAIGN**

AFA's Member Get a Member Campaign, which ran from October through December 2008 brought in 330 new members for AFA. **Our thanks go to all of you who participated in this campaign!**

A computer generated random selection drawing was used to determine the winners.

They are as follows:

1st Prize (Dell Studio 15 Lap-top Computer) goes to Dann Mattiza, Florida

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize (\$1000) goes to Richard Ortega, Florida

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize (16 GB iPOD Touch) goes to Frank Hayes, New York

The top three recruiters in the challenge were:

Richard Ortega

Harry Bailey

Dann Mattiza

### **RUMORED CHANGES TO TRICARE AND TRICARE FOR LIFE**

Several of you have written in about possible Congressional action to reduce the Tricare-for-Life benefit. Here is what I have passed to our AFA leaders:

Recently, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released the first of a two-volume report intended to help Congress address the rising costs associated with healthcare by compiling numerous budget options. According to its website, the mandate of CBO is "to provide the Congress with the objective, timely, nonpartisan analyses needed for economic and budget decisions and with the information and estimates required for the Congressional budget process." Though this report is consistent with that mandate and a long-running set of similar CBO reports exist, AFA has been contacted by many of its members with specific concerns about the options that were offered regarding TRICARE for Life (TFL.)

It is worth noting that only four of the total 115 options (options 95-98) specifically address military retirees and veterans. Of those four, only option 96 is specific to TFL. CBO analysts suggest the government can recoup about \$2 billion annually by requiring that beneficiaries pay the first \$525 in costs out-of-pocket and half of the following \$4,725 in Medicare cost sharing. It would also impose user fees for TFL beneficiaries who use their Military Treatment Facility.

AFA has followed this issue closely in recent days and can find no evidence that President Bush, President-Elect Obama, nor any Member of Congress has publicly supported any of the options in this CBO report. The report does not suggest or provide any option for the dismantling of TFL, and AFA sees no reason to believe that military retirees are in danger of suddenly losing their TFL benefit. Finally, the CBO report unequivocally states that such a cost-shift to the recipient "could discourage some patients (particularly low-income patients) from seeking preventive medical care or from managing their chronic conditions under close medical supervision, which might negatively affect their health." In recent years Congress has consistently opposed initiatives that would discourage veterans and military retirees from seeking the care that they have earned and we see no evidence that this bipartisan viewpoint has changed.

AFA has been an ardent supporter of TRICARE for Life, dating back to the demonstration program. TFL is a benefit earned through service to our country that should not be diminished; our membership can rest assured that AFA will continue to support a robust and affordable health care option for our military retirees. Interested persons should go to the source and read what the report says. It can be found at <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/99xx/doc9925/12-18-HealthOptions.pdf>

### **FINALLY, AN INTERESTING FACT**

As many of you have noted ... the pilot who landed on the Hudson River this week was an Air Force pilot, graduate of the USAF Academy, and flew F-4s. His skillful airmanship ensured the safety of his passengers and his crew. AFA's congratulations go out to him and those who helped train him.

Best

Mike

Michael M. Dunn  
President/CEO