



COLUMBIA VOYAGER

<http://www.TriCitiesMOAA.org>

chapter@TriCitiesMOAA.org

May 2010

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Country Gentleman in May

Our meeting on May 18 will be at the Country Gentleman, on Clearwater Ave., west of Columbia Center Blvd. We've always had great meals there; the menu this month looks equally promising.

As we go to press, the invited speaker still hasn't confirmed, so you'll just have to trust us that we will have an enjoyable evening of good food and fellowship.

Reservations by Friday, May 14.

Donation to SIGN

At the March meeting, Dr. Lou Zirkle described the work of his non-profit organization, SIGN, providing medical treatment for broken bones in third world countries. The board of directors voted to donate \$100 from the Chapter to SIGN.

From Hq MOAA . . .

21% Cut Fixed - Until June

Congress can act fast when it absolutely has to, and it absolutely had to on April 15 - the last day Medicare could avoid imposing a 21% cut in payments to doctors that many doctors say would cause them to stop seeing Medicare and military patients.

Within the space of five hours, the Senate voted to defer the 21% cut until June 1. Because that was a month longer delay than the House proposed, House leaders greased another vote to approve the longer delay, and the bill was rushed to the White House so President Obama could sign it into law that night.

The cuts technically went into effect on April 1, but Medicare exer-

cised its authority to hold claims for up to 10 business days, in anticipation that Congress would approve the delay.

Still, the fact is that this is one more can-kicking exercise.

Now, legislators will try to figure out a way to push back the cuts until the end of the year, and next year they'll have to go through a new drill to avoid a 25% cut in January 2011.

The constant battles on this issue stem from the inability of Congress to agree on how to pay for the \$240 billion permanent fix. More and more legislators are insisting it should be paid for by cutting other spending. But finding a package of \$240 billion in spending cuts that a majority of legislators would vote for is an equally daunting challenge.

Needless to say, this isn't a trivial issue. Hill leaders simply must find a way to get past this problem so seniors and military beneficiaries aren't being held hostage to monthly threats of having their health care access cut off.

Coverage For Your 20-Somethings

One popular element of the new national health reform legislation would allow parents to continue their children on the parent's health coverage until age 26 - even if the child is married and/or living or employed elsewhere, provided the child doesn't have access to other qualifying coverage.

This week, bills were introduced in the House and the Senate to allow continued TRICARE coverage for such children of military parents. It takes another law change because the TRICARE law allows coverage

only up to age 23 for dependent children enrolled in college.

This week, MOAA sent letters to Rep. Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Senator Mark Udall (D-CO) thanking them for introducing bills to extend TRICARE coverage (H.R. 4923 and S. 3201, respectively).

The bills, which allow the Secretary of Defense to charge an appropriate premium for the extended

coverage, are expected to be rolled into the defense authorization bill.

But it's not going to happen overnight. The Heinrich and Udall bills will be rolled into the Defense Authorization bill, which won't be finalized until October or November. And then the Defense Department will have to negotiate a change to TRICARE contracts. So it's likely to be sometime in 2011 before the

change takes effect for military parents.

In the meantime, parents whose children are about to "age out" of TRICARE eligibility can elect to participate in the **Continued Health Care Benefit Program**, which provides TRICARE Standard-type coverage for beneficiaries who lose eligibility for TRICARE, for a premium of about \$930 per quarter.

Lewis and Clark Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
106 Hills West Way
Richland WA 99352-9446

Country Gentleman
9221 W. Clearwater Ave
Kennewick

Social hour at 6:30
Dinner at 7:00
\$25 per person

***A reservation made
is a reservation paid.***

May Meeting

Tuesday, May 18

Reservations by
Friday, May 14

Bob Allen
627-6226
MOAA.TriCities@charter.org

Menu

Tri-Tip Beef
Stuffed Chicken Breast
Scalloped Potatoes
Strawberry Spinach
Greek Pasta
Rolls & Butter
Coffee/Tea

No-host bar available