



Don Nickles, Chairman
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FY05 BUDGET RESOLUTION...SECURITY, OPPORTUNITY, RESPONSIBILITY Veterans

The budget provides \$70.4 billion in FY 2005 for veterans programs, an increase of \$9 billion or 15 percent. For discretionary spending alone, the budget assumes \$30.5 billion, an increase of \$1.3 billion or 4.4 percent over last year.

Overall Medical Care. The budget proposes \$29.1 billion for veterans medical care, an increase of \$1.4 billion or 5 percent over 2004. Spending for veterans medical care has doubled since 1993, and increased 42 percent since President Bush submitted his first budget for FY2001.

Patient Access and Coverage. With the total resources for medical care, the Department of Veterans Affairs predicts it will be able to provide care to nearly 5.2 million patients, over 1 million more than in 2001, marking a 20-percent increase. During the last three years, VA has opened 194 new community clinics, bringing the total to 676. Nearly nine out of every 10 enrolled veterans now live within 30 minutes of a VA medical facility.

Prosthetic Research. The budget assumes an amendment offered by Sen. Bunning during committee consideration to increase Medical and Prosthetic Research by \$101 million in FY 2005 and by \$536 million during the five-year budget window.

Maintaining Lower Costs for Veterans. The budget rejects Administration proposals to establish a \$250 enrollment fee for some veterans and a to increase prescription drug co-payments for some veterans.

Concurrent Receipt. Last year, Congress changed law to allow veterans to receive both disability benefits and retirement pay. The compensation package is set to be phased in over the next 10 years. The budget reflects passage of this legislation, resulting in increased payments of more than \$3 billion in FY 2005.

Other Benefit Increases. The budget reflects increases in spending for Veterans Compensation, pensions, insurance funds and readjustment programs of \$7.6 billion over last year, an increase of 23.6 percent.