



Duckworth/Collins Reintroduce Legislation To Reduce Veterans' Health Care Costs and Protect Access To Care

February 24 2021 10:08 AM

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) today re-introduced bipartisan legislation to reduce health care costs and ensure parity for Veterans impacted by the COVID19 pandemic. The *No Coronavirus Copays for Veterans Act* would make sure that Veterans who receive health care from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) are not liable for out-of-pocket costs for qualifying coronavirus preventive services. U.S. Representatives U.S. Representative Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14), Julia Brownley (D-CA-26), Lee Zeldin (R-NY-01) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01) also helped introduce the legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

“All Americans deserve access to the best healthcare possible—especially those who’ve sacrificed to defend our nation—and that healthcare includes the COVID-19 vaccine and possible preventive services related to the virus,” Duckworth said. “I’m proud to re-introduce this common-sense bipartisan legislation today with Senator Collins to make sure Veterans don’t have to pay more for vaccines or preventive services related to COVID-19 than other insured Americans.”

“Our veterans have sacrificed so much for our nation, and we owe it to them to provide the health care they have earned through their service, particularly during the current public health crisis,” said Senator Collins. “The tragic outbreaks of COVID-19 that have occurred at veterans homes underscore the importance of ensuring that veterans have access to preventive COVID-19 care. This bipartisan bill Senator Duckworth and I are introducing would help protect veterans’ health by ensuring that co-pays for preventive care do not pose a barrier to our veterans.”

In March of 2020, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which waived copays for qualifying items, services, or immunizations intended to prevent or mitigate COVID19—including an eventual vaccine—for Medicare beneficiaries and privately insured individuals. However, the *CARES Act* did not extend these protections to Veterans receiving VHA care. The *No Coronavirus Copays for Veterans Act* corrects this loophole to ensure that Veterans are equally protected.

In addition to the *No Coronavirus Copays for Veterans Act*, Duckworth, Underwood and Collins have [introduced](#) the *Veterans Preventive Health Coverage Fairness Act*. Under current law, Veterans receiving care through the Department of Veterans Affairs are required to make copayments for preventive services and immunizations, which are covered without cost sharing by nearly all private insurance companies due to requirements under the Affordable Care Act. The *Veterans Preventive Health Coverage Fairness Act* would ensure parity by removing copay requirements for preventive services and medications recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Health Resources & Services Administration.

The *No Coronavirus Copays for Veterans Act* is endorsed by American Veterans (AMVETS) and the Service Women's Action Network (SWAN).