

American Academy  
of Pediatrics  
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



July 13, 2015

The Honorable John McCain, Chairman  
Senate Armed Services Committee

The Honorable Mac Thornberry, Chairman  
House Armed Services Committee

The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking Member  
Senate Armed Services Committee

The Honorable Adam Smith, Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee

Members of the Conference Committee of the Senate and House of Representatives for the  
National Defense Authorization Act of 2016

Dear Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, and  
Conferees:

The TRICARE for Kids (TFK) Coalition, a stakeholder group of children's health care advocacy and professional organizations, disability advocacy groups, military and veterans' service organizations and military families committed to ensuring that TRICARE meets the unique health needs of the more than two million children of military families covered by TRICARE, wishes to thank you for the inclusion of Section 735 in S. 1376, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2016. Section 735, which directs the Secretary of Defense to submit a report setting forth a plan of the Department of Defense to improve pediatric care and related services for children covered by TRICARE, is greatly needed and your direction to the Secretary is much appreciated. This provision is a timely follow up to the original "TRICARE for Kids" legislation, Section 735 of the 2013 NDAA, which originated in the House, thus demonstrating the ongoing, broad bicameral support for ensuring that TRICARE meets the unique needs of children.

The TRICARE for Kids Coalition wishes to specifically bring to your attention the importance of Section 735 to children and military families, and request that as you conference, you reconcile the House and Senate legislation to include it in the final product:

**Section 735. Report on plan to improve pediatric care and related services for children of members of the Armed Forces**

Section 735 in the Senate FY 2016 NDAA directs the Department of Defense to issue a report that outlines its plan to improve pediatric care and related services. The new report would require the Department of Defense to prepare a plan to align preventive pediatric care under the TRICARE program with preventive standards required by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (AAP's Bright Futures for children), guidelines established for such care by the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program and recommendations by organizations that specialize in pediatrics. We also appreciate the directive to develop a uniform definition of "pediatric medical necessity;" revise certification requirements for residential treatment centers; develop measures to evaluate and improve access to pediatric care; improve the quality of and access to behavioral health care; mitigate the impact of permanent changes of station and mitigate deficiencies in data collection, data utilization, and data analysis to improve pediatric care and related services.

The TFK Coalition reiterates its appreciation for your leadership and appreciates your consideration and inclusion of these items of great importance to military connected children and their families during conference committee reconciliation. We look forward to working with you on these issues going forward and would respectfully request, as a next step in the TRICARE for Kids process, hearings in both the Senate and House Armed Services Committees specific to the impact on children of both the current system and any proposed changes.

Thank you for working with the TFK Coalition, military families and the Department of Defense to ensure that the current and future military health care system truly meets the unique health needs of children of military families.

Sincerely,

**TRICARE for Kids Coalition**

American Academy of Pediatrics  
Autism Speaks  
Children's Hospital Association  
Commissioned Officers Association of the United States Public Health Services  
Easter Seals  
Family Voices  
March of Dimes  
Military Child Education Coalition  
Military Family Advisory Network  
Military Kids Matter  
Military Officers Association of America  
Military Special Needs Network  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Military Family Association