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Title: Calling on the Congress and the President of the United States to direct the Veterans Administration to allow maximum flexibility in authorizing our returning Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans to access civilian health care providers when these veterans are unable to obtain timely mental health and other critically needed medical care from the Veterans Administration.

Sponsors: Councilmember Squilla, Councilmember Oh

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9/27/2012	0	CITY COUNCIL	ADOPTED		
9/20/2012	0	CITY COUNCIL	Introduced and Ordered Placed On Next Week's Final Passage Calendar	Pass	

Calling on the Congress and the President of the United States to direct the Veterans Administration to allow maximum flexibility in authorizing our returning Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans to access civilian health care providers when these veterans are unable to obtain timely mental health and other critically needed medical care from the Veterans Administration.

WHEREAS, The United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard have been involved in the Global War on Terrorism in conflicts in Iraq an Afghanistan for over 10 years; and

WHEREAS, Many members of the United States military have served in multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan and many of these service men and women have returned from these wars with serious long-term medical injuries and war wounds including, traumatic brain injuries, post traumatic stress disorders and historic high levels of suicide; and

WHEREAS, The United States has a long and proud tradition of caring for our returning military veterans; and

WHEREAS, Many of our returning military members have to endure long transits to VA medical care facilities and extremely long delays in getting much-needed medical appointments, with some experiencing delays of 60 days or more for mental health evaluations alone; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Administration has the authority to refer veterans to civilian medical providers when they can't get timely care from a VA care facility; and

WHEREAS, There already exists the Tricare Health Network which provides health care to military personnel and retirees, their families and survivors through the use of civilian medical providers; and

WHEREAS, Now within the Tricare Network there exists fee discounts which have already been negotiated with medical providers; and

WHEREAS, A level of trust has been developed over time with the Tricare Network within the military veteran community; and

WHEREAS, Given the number of returning war veterans requiring medical care and the acknowledged shortage of Veterans Administration health care providers; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the City of Philadelphia calls on the Congress and the President of the United States to direct the Veterans Administration to allow the maximum flexibility possible in authorizing our returning Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans to access civilian health care providers when these veterans are unable to obtain timely mental health and other critical medical care from the Veterans Administration.