

# **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 22, 2009

## **VA Health Care Funding Reform Major Victory for Veterans**

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 — The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) today applauds President Obama for signing the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act, calling it “the most significant legislative victory for veterans in a generation.”

“This is a great, historic day for all veterans and their families,” said DAV National Commander Roberto “Bobby” Barrera, who was at the signing ceremony in the White House. “Veterans, families, survivors and everyone else who cares about the plight of veterans can rejoice knowing that for the first time ever, the Department of Veterans Affairs’ health care system can be assured it will be funded on time and adequately every year.”

“We have worked for this for more than two decades as veterans suffered. Approval of advance appropriations is the most significant legislative victory for veterans in a generation,” he said. “This legislation will help ensure timely access to medical care for the men and women who have served, are serving and will serve in defense of our nation.”

“This long overdue legislation will make a difference for every disabled veteran and every future disabled veteran,” said Commander Barrera. “This victory flows from the effective collaboration by veterans organizations in the Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform, The Military Coalition and a dedicated group of former VA officials who joined our cause. Most important, this is happening because veterans across the country, including so many DAV members and supporters, stepped up and called on Congress to put an end to chronic funding lapses occurring for decades. Together, we stood up for veterans, and veterans and their families are going to benefit.”

“This historic legislation will ensure an uninterrupted, predictable flow of funds for veterans health care programs even if Congress is unable to complete work on the rest of the federal budget by the start of a fiscal year,” said DAV National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. “With funding assured, VA hospital and clinic directors will no longer have to delay the hiring of new doctors or nurses, or the purchase of new medical equipment, due to Congress’ failure to approve a budget on time; something that has occurred in 20 of the past 23 years, including this year. With advance appropriations in place, VA officials will be able to plan ahead how best to provide veterans with the medical care they have earned: when and where they need it.”

The Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act authorizes Congress to approve veterans medical care funding one year in advance to better meet the anticipated demand for veterans health care services. The advanced funding will give the Department of Veterans Affairs up to a full year to plan for the most effective and efficient way of delivering medical care. Additionally, this now requires the Government Accountability Office to audit the budget development process to ensure that sufficient funds are included.

The 1.2 million-member Disabled American Veterans, a non-profit organization founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932, represents this nation’s disabled veterans. It is dedicated to a single purpose: building better lives for our nation’s disabled veterans and their families. More information is available at [www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org).

###