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## **PRESIDENT SIGNS VETERANS' EMERGENCY CARE FAIRNESS ACT**

*Chairman Akaka introduced Senate bill to cover gaps in emergency care for veterans with limited insurance*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI) today praised President Barack Obama's signing of the **Veterans' Emergency Care Fairness Act of 2009**.

*"For veterans with limited insurance, a trip to the emergency room should not result in financial ruin,"* said Chairman Akaka, who [introduced](#) the bill in the Senate last year.

*"With this new law, VA will be positioned to help veterans who are enrolled in VA care whose insurance does not cover the full cost of emergency treatment."*

The Veterans' Emergency Care Fairness Act, signed into law by President Obama last night, will enable the Department of Veterans Affairs to reimburse veterans enrolled in VA health care for the remaining cost of emergency treatment if the veteran has outside insurance that only covers part of the cost. Previously, VA could reimburse veterans or pay outside hospitals directly only if a veteran has no outside health insurance.

In addition to reimbursing veterans for emergency care in the future, the bill allows the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide retroactive reimbursements for care received prior to the passage of this bill. Akaka has received correspondence from veterans who were unable to receive financial assistance under the previous rules, and plans to share their information with Secretary Shinseki.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that this legislation will cover approximately 700 future claims per year and as many as 2,000 veterans retroactively.

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