

NLWJC - Kagan

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Veterans Affairs - General



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

May 1, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR BRUCE REED
ELENA KAGAN

FROM: Nancy-Ann Min 
SUBJECT: Idea for Memorial Day Announcement/Event

On the day after Memorial Day last year, the President announced that he would seek precedent-setting legislation, marking the first time that *children* of American soldiers would receive benefits for combat-related health problems. This Memorial Day might be a good opportunity for the President to announce how the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has adopted an innovative approach to implementing this policy.

Background

Following the President's May 1996 announcement, the Administration transmitted to Congress legislation to provide medical care and rehabilitation benefits and pay compensation to those children of Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and who are suffering from spina bifida. Congress passed the legislation and, on September 26, 1996, the President signed P.L. 104-204. Because the VA health care system is focused on adult veterans, providing services to children nationwide for congenital defects that require long-term multi-disciplinary care has been a challenge.

VA Signs An Agreement with Shriners Hospital for Children

Since Congress delayed the effective date of these benefits until October 1, 1997, the Administration had the opportunity to develop a coordinated approach to implementing the policy. On March 28, 1997, in an extraordinary example of public-nonprofit partnership, VA signed an agreement with Shriners Hospital for Children (SHC) to provide free, high-quality medical care to children of Vietnam veterans who are suffering from spina bifida (see attached press release). Under the agreement, VA will identify the entitled children and refer them for treatment at one of the seventeen orthopedic Shriners Hospitals located in the United States (see attached).

This partnership between VA and Shriners is an innovative solution that will provide the best quality care at no cost to the government. With a mission to provide expert orthopedic care to children totally without charge, Shriners hospitals treat a greater number of children with spina bifida than any other single healthcare provider. I understand that Rep. Joe Kennedy played a role in orchestrating this arrangement.

Beginning in October, VA will cover the transportation costs for children and their parents or legal guardians to any Shriners Hospital. In addition, VA will reimburse other facilities for any necessary medical services not provided by Shriners. Estimates of the total number of children who may use VA benefits range from 600 to 2,000.



Department of
Veterans Affairs

Office of Public Affairs
News Service

Washington, D.C. 20460

News Release

VA Announces Agreement With Shriners; Children To Benefit

Springfield, Mass., March 28, 1997 -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is announcing an agreement with the Shriners Hospitals for Children (SHC) to provide the best available medical care to children of Vietnam veterans who are suffering from spina bifida.

The agreement follows a National Academy of Sciences report last year on Vietnam veterans and Agent Orange, which concluded that there is limited/suggestive evidence that the children of Vietnam veterans who served in theater face an elevated risk of spina bifida. VA sought and Congress approved legislation (P.L. 104-204) enabling the department to provide medical benefits, vocational training, and cash assistance to children of Vietnam veterans born with the disease.

Said VA Secretary Jesse Brown, "Today marks the beginning of new hope for some of our youngest Americans with spina bifida and their families. We don't know how many children of Vietnam veterans may suffer from this disabling disease. But we do know that their future looks brighter today because the Shriners Hospitals for Children will be working with VA in providing them treatment."

SHC, a not-for-profit charitable corporation, is the largest pediatric orthopedic hospital system in the country with 17 units located in 15 states.

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Under the agreement, SHC will evaluate children with spina bifida whose entitlement has been established by VA, a process initiated by calling 1-800-827-1000. For those accepted for treatment, SHC will provide outpatient or inpatient care for this diagnosis up to age 18. SHC will accept no reimbursement for this care.

Beginning in October, for children older than 18 and for those whose parents or guardians choose not to receive their care at SHC, VA will reimburse the non-SHC facilities for providing appropriate care. VA also will begin reimbursing non-SHC facilities for necessary medical services that are not offered by SHC and cover transportation costs for patients and their parent or legal guardian to an SHC unit or any outside facility required for proper treatment of the patient.

There are approximately 600 Vietnam veterans' children with spina bifida known to VA. Estimates of the total number of children who might be using these benefits range between 1,000 and 3,000.

Currently, approximately 5,000 children afflicted with spina bifida are receiving treatment at SHC facilities, the largest number of such patients treated by one hospital system throughout the world.

VA Announces Agreement With Shriners; Children To Benefit

<http://www.va.gov/pressrel/shriners.htm>

Over its 75-year existence, SHC has provided medical treatment to more than 500,000 children and has done so totally free of charge, accepting neither government, insurance nor family reimbursement.

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**Shriners Hospitals for Children (SHC)
Orthopaedic Hospitals**

<u>*Chicago Hospital</u>	2211 N. Oak Park Ave. Chicago, IL 60635-3392 312-622-5400
<u>Erie Hospital</u>	1645 W. 8th St. Erie, PA 16505 814-875-8700
<u>Greenville Hospital</u>	950 West Faris Road Greenville, SC 29605-4277 864-271-3444
<u>Honolulu, Hospital</u>	1310 Punahou St. Honolulu, HI 96826-1099 808-941-4466
<u>Houston, Hospital</u>	6977 Main Houston, TX 77030-3701 713-797-1616
<u>Intermountain Hospital</u>	Fairfax Ave at Virginia St. Salt Lake City, UT 84103 801-536-3500
<u>Lexington Hospital</u>	1900 Richmond Rd. Lexington, KY 40502 606-266-2101
<u>*# Northern California Hospital</u>	2425 Stockton Blvd. Sacramento, CA 95817 916-453-2000
<u>Los Angeles Hospital</u>	3160 Geneva St. Los Angeles, CA 90020 213-388-3151
<u>*Philadelphia Hospital</u>	8400 Roosevelt Blvd. Philadelphia, PA 19152 215-332-4500
<u>Portland Hospital</u>	3101 SW Sam Jackson Park Road Portland, OR 97201-5090 503-241-5090

<u>St. Louis Hospital</u>	2001 S. Lindbergh Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63131-3597 314-432-3600
<u>Shreveport Hospital</u>	3100 Samford Ave. Shreveport, LA 71103 318-222-5704
<u>Spokane Hospital</u>	911 W. Fifth Ave. Spokane, WA 99204-2901 509-455-7844
<u>Springfield Hospital</u>	516 Carew St. Springfield, MA 01104 413-787-2000
<u>Tampa Hospital</u>	12502 North Pine Dr. Tampa, FL 33612-9499
<u>Twin Cities Hospital</u>	2025 E. River Rd. Minneapolis, MN 55414 612-335-5300

* Includes Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitative Center

Includes Burn Center