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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Legion leader says, "for once and for all, say no to TRICARE fee increases!"

WASHINGTON (April 11, 2013) -- The leader of The American Legion has reiterated his organization's strong opposition to any increases in the premiums paid by military retirees for their TRICARE for Life medical insurance coverage. TRICARE for Life is the Department of Defense-administered medical insurance plan for retired career service members over the age of 65. The DoD's just released budget plan for fiscal year 2014 includes marginal raises in TRICARE for Life co-pays and an overall fee increase to 2 percent of gross retired pay within five years.

"That is egregious enough," said James E. Koutz, national commander of the 2.4 million member Legion, the nation's largest veterans service organization, "but the Pentagon budget also includes proposals to raise fees and premiums for working age enrollees in the TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Extra plans. Those raises may start out slowly at first, but escalate rapidly over the next several years. So again -- and more loudly than ever -- we say no to the idea of placing more and increasingly significant financial burdens on those who have dedicated their working lives to serving our country. These periodically resurrected proposals remain absolutely unacceptable. We said it last year. We say it this year and, if necessary, we'll say it next year and the next and the next. Raising TRICARE fees is a bad idea that effectively punishes loyal citizens who have already sacrificed quite enough on behalf of all of us.

"Even the Pentagon itself must suspect as much," continued Koutz, "given that the happily titled "People Are Central" section of their just issued "Summary of the DoD Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Proposal" makes absolutely no mention of the TRICARE fee increase proposal. That, in itself, should tell Congress all it needs to know. We hope that our senators and congressmen will do the right thing and say, for once and for all, NO to TRICARE fee increases."

The American Legion has traditionally resisted proposals to increase TRICARE premiums and fees. Its formal opposition was most recently articulated in a resolution passed unanimously by Legion leadership at their annual convention in August 2012.

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