

# VA Dental Insurance Reauthorization Act of 2016 (S. 3055)

*Introduced by Senators Burr and Tester*

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## Summary

The Department of Veterans Affairs Dental Insurance Reauthorization Act of 2016 (S. 3055) transitions the successful dental insurance pilot program to a statutory program that will serve eligible veterans, survivors and dependents of veterans across the entire VA. S. 3055 reauthorizes the [VA administered dental insurance program](#) for a period of five years and ensures that veterans continue to have access to high quality, low-cost dental insurance. The program is voluntary and provides veterans with coverage for endodontics, diagnostic, preventative, restorative, surgical and emergency dental services.

## Background

When Senator Burr was serving as the Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, Congress approved the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-163). The legislation included a provision authored by Senator Burr that created a pilot program to offer high quality, low-cost dental insurance to eligible veterans, survivors and dependents of veterans who otherwise would not have access to dental insurance. The President signed the legislation into law in May 2010, and the pilot program began in 2014.

The original pilot program was established for three years and has been operating since 2014. Hence, without action by Congress, the program will expire in 2017, and potentially tens of thousands of veterans and their family members could lose this important benefit. Veterans and their families have given this program high marks for quality and access to care. This legislation seeks to make the dental insurance program a statutory program and ensure that eligible veterans, survivors and dependents of veterans continue to have access to high quality, low-cost dental insurance. Veterans who are eligible to receive their dental care directly from the VA will not be impacted by this program and will continue to receive their care through VA.

## Additional Information

VA only provides full dental care to a few select classes of veterans: 100% disabled veterans, former prisoners of war and veterans who have a service-connected dental disability or condition. Therefore, the vast majority of veterans do not have access to dental care through VA. This program is currently operated through contracts with Delta Dental and Metlife. Veterans pay low premiums; for example, in Raleigh, NC, the premium is \$13.88 per month for a single veteran who chooses the standard plan. The premiums cover the cost of the program.

\*Eligible survivors and dependents are those who are enrolled in ChampVA.