THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1200 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

DEC 22 2006

The Honorable John W. Warner
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Mr. Chairman:

House Report 109-464, to accompany the Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2007, requests the Department of Defense to provide $400,000 for the Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization pilot project and report on its progress by December 15, 2006.

The Fiscal Year 2007 Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for the Defense Health Program has not yet been enacted. TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) is currently operating under a continuing resolution and not in a position to make a determination regarding the requested disbursement. Once the bill is enacted, a decision will promptly be made in this regard.

The TMA has been diligently managing the Fort Drum Project. As a result of our efforts, a substantive partnership has been established between Fort Drum and the civilian community. At the completion of the pilot project, we will provide a final report outlining activities and actions taken during the pilot project which have built cooperative health care arrangements and agreements among the military installation and local and regional non-military health care systems.

Thank you for your continued support of the Military Health System.

Sincerely,

William Winkenwerder, Jr., MD

cc:
The Honorable Carl Levin
Ranking Member