

NASVH Washington Legislative Update – May 4, 2006

NASVH'S STATE HOME LEGISLATION GOING BEFORE SENATE COMMITTEE NEXT WEEK

Next Thursday, May 11, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee will conduct a hearing on veterans health care matters which will include consideration of the Veterans Long Term Care Security Act, legislation drafted by NASVH to strengthen the State Homes system. Legislative Chair Bob Shaw will be testifying in front of Chairman Larry Craig (ID) and other Members of the Committee on behalf of NASVH.

The Veterans' Long Term Care Security Act embodies several of NASVH's key legislative priorities for this year. The currently-unnumbered bill will be introduced by Senator Daniel Akaka (HI), the Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, and is expected to be cosponsored by additional Members of the Committee and the Senate. NASVH is also working with the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to have this same legislation introduced by senior Members of the House Committee.

The four main provisions of the NASVH bill would:

- 1) Strengthen the per diem program by requiring that VA report to Congress before making any reductions in per diem payments;
- 2) Authorize VA to pay the full cost of care for seriously-disabled, service-connected veterans residing in State Homes;
- 3) Require VA to provide prescription medications for 50% or greater service-connected disabled veterans residing in State Homes; and
- 4) Allow States, particularly rural States, to treat certain small long term care units for veterans in other health care facilities as if they were State Homes to allow them to receive federal per diem payments.

NASVH will continue working with both Committees to pass these key provisions of the legislation and we will keep you informed of any new developments. In addition, we may need to ask for your help at crucial moments in reaching out to Members of the House and Senate for their support.