

By Bruce Mildwurf

Apex, N.C. — More than 1 million people between the ages of 19 and 25 now have insurance coverage compared to one year ago because of national health care reform, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

One of the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was to allow people to remain covered by their parents' until age 26. Previously, children weren't covered after they turned 23.

The law primarily addresses people covered by private health insurance, however, and didn't change anything for families under military insurance plans. Officials in President Barack Obama's administration said misinformation was tossed around during last year's debate on the legislation about how the new law would impact military families, so military insurance plans were removed to get the measure passed.

David Suter said he was shocked to learn recently that his two college-age children would soon lose their coverage under the CHAMPVA policy he has as a disabled Air Force veteran.

His daughter, Heather, a student at East Carolina University, turns 23 in December. His son Josh, a student at North Carolina State University, will turn 23 by mid-2013.

"How am I going to come up with money to buy an insurance policy for her?" Suter asked.

He said he supported the health reform plan last year thinking it would give his children more time to get on their feet after college and find their own insurance.

"Like (Obama) said, there's a lot of American families that are hurting," Suter said.

Administration officials are trying to rectify the situation.

Coverage for young adults was extended to age 26 for military families in the TRICARE insurance program as part of the defense authorization bill this year. A bill to extend coverage for CHAMPVA families is pending in the House Committee on Veterans Affairs.

**Fourth District Congressman David Price** said he plans to sign on as a co-sponsor of the bill.

"There is no reason we should deny these benefits to families using CHAMPVA," **Price** said in a statement. "The job of health reform can't be considered finished when military families are not realizing all the benefits."

Suter said he's used to fighting, and he doesn't plan to let his children's insurance lapse without another battle.

"It took me over 5½ years to get my disability," he said. "Being a disabled vet, I'm used to being last."