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**I. FAS Veterans' Healthcare Authorization.**

In enacting the COFAs, Congressional intent was to cover healthcare for veterans in their home countries. While VA "hospital care and medical services" in the FAS is discretionary, the US-FAS agreements regarding telehealth and other issues "shall" be entered into. With respect to timing, note that the agreements "shall" be entered into "before" any hospital care is provided, but there is no language conditioning the VA care only "if" hospital care is sought.

**48 USC §1988. United States policy regarding the Freely Associated States**

**(4) Legal issues**

**(A) Agreements to furnish care and services**

**(i) In general**

Before delivering hospital care or medical services under subsection (f) of section 1724 of title 38, as added by paragraph (2)(B), ***the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall enter into agreements with the governments of the Freely Associated States to-***

***(I) facilitate the furnishing of health services, including telehealth, under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to veterans in the Freely Associated States, such as by addressing-***

(aa) licensure, certification, registration, and tort issues relating to health care personnel;

(bb) the scope of health services the Secretary may furnish, as well as the means for furnishing such services; and

(cc) matters relating to delivery of pharmaceutical products and medical surgical products, including delivery of such products through the Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to the Freely Associated States;

(II) clarify the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay for tort claims as set forth under subparagraph (C); and

(III) clarify authority and responsibility on any other matters determined relevant by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the governments of the Freely Associated States.

**§138 USC §724. Hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care abroad**

(f)(1)(A) The Secretary may furnish hospital care and medical services in the Freely Associated States, subject to ***agreements the Secretary shall enter into with the governments of the Freely Associated States as described in section 209(a)(4)(A) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2024***, and subject to subparagraph (B), to a veteran who is otherwise eligible to receive hospital care and medical services.

(B) The agreements described in subparagraph (A) shall incorporate, to the extent practicable, the applicable laws of the Freely Associated States and define the care and services that can be legally provided by the Secretary in the Freely Associated States.

(2) In furnishing hospital care and medical services under paragraph (1), the Secretary may furnish hospital care and medical services through-

(A) contracts or other agreements;

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- (B) reimbursement; or
- (C) the direct provision of care by health care personnel of the Department.

**II. Interagency Group (As contained in the authorizing legislation, [P.L. 118-42](#))**

SEC. 208. OVERSIGHT PROVISIONS.

(d) Interagency Group on Freely Associated States.--

(1) Establishment.--The President, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of Defense, shall establish an Interagency Group on Freely Associated States (referred to in this subsection as the "Interagency Group").

(2) Purpose.--The purposes of the Interagency Group are--

(A) to coordinate development and implementation of executive branch policies, programs, services, and other activities in or relating to the Freely Associated States; and

(B) to provide policy guidance, recommendations, and oversight to Federal agencies, departments, and instrumentalities with respect to the implementation of--

- (i) the 2023 Amended U.S.-FSM Compact;
- (ii) the 2023 Amended U.S.-RMI Compact; and
- (iii) the 2023 U.S.-Palau Compact Review Agreement.

(3) Membership.--The Interagency Group shall consist of--

(A) the Secretary of State, who shall serve as co-chair of the Interagency Group;

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, who shall serve as co-chair of the Interagency Group;

(C) the Secretary of Defense;

(D) the Secretary of the Treasury;

(E) the heads of relevant Federal agencies, departments, and instrumentalities carrying out obligations under--

(i) sections 131 and 132 of the 2003 Amended U.S.-FSM Compact and subsections (a) and (b) of section 221 and section 261 of the 2023 Amended U.S.-FSM Compact;

(ii) sections 131 and 132 of the 2003 Amended U.S.-RMI Compact and subsections (a) and (b) of section 221 and section 261 of the 2023 Amended U.S.-RMI Compact;

(iii) sections 131 and 132 and subsections (a) and (b) of section 221 of the U.S.-Palau Compact;

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(iv) Article 6 of the 2023 U.S.-Palau Compact Review Agreement;

(v) any applicable subsidiary agreement; and

(vi) section 209; and

(F) the head of any other Federal agency, department, or instrumentality that the Secretary of State or the Secretary of the Interior may designate.

(4) Duties of secretary of state and secretary of the interior.--The Secretary of State (or a senior official designee of the Secretary of State) and the Secretary of the Interior (or a senior official designee of the Secretary of the Interior) shall--

(A) co-lead and preside at a meeting of the Interagency Group not less frequently than annually;

(B) determine, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, the agenda for meetings of the Interagency Group; and

(C) facilitate and coordinate the work of the Interagency Group.

(5) Duties of the interagency group.--The Interagency Group shall--

(A) provide advice on the establishment or implementation of policies relating to the Freely Associated States to the President, acting through the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, in the form of a written report not less frequently than annually;

(B) obtain information and advice relating to the Freely Associated States from the Presidents, other elected officials, and members of civil society of the Freely Associated States, including through the members of the Interagency Group (including senior official designees of the members) meeting not less frequently than annually with any Presidents of the Freely Associated States who elect to participate;

(C) at the request of the head of any Federal agency (or a senior official designee of the head of a Federal agency) who is a member of the Interagency Group, promptly review and provide advice on a policy or policy implementation action affecting 1 or more of the Freely Associated States proposed by the Federal agency, department, or instrumentality; and

(D) facilitate coordination of relevant policies, programs, initiatives, and activities involving 1 or more of the Freely Associated States, including ensuring coherence and avoiding duplication between programs, initiatives, and activities conducted pursuant to a Compact with a Freely Associated State and non-Compact programs, initiatives, and activities.

(6) Reports.--Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act and each year

thereafter in which a Compact of Free Association with a Freely Associated State is in effect, the President shall submit to the majority leader and minority leader of the Senate, the and minority leader of the House of Representatives, and the appropriate committees of Congress a report that describes the activities and recommendations of the Interagency Group during the applicable year.