

DVA HEALTH PROVIDERS PARTNERSHIP FORUM: Meeting Summary 3/2018, 8 June 2018

Attendees contributed to discussion on a range of issues critical to quality veteran health care:

Veteran Centric Reform (VCR)

Attendees were briefed regarding achievements in Year 1 of DVA's VCR program and the focus for future work, including channel management and engagement strategies and proactive interventions, for example a trial of provisional access to medical treatment (PAMT). Under the PAMT trial, which commences 18 June 2018, ex-ADF members who lodge a claim for one or more 20 specific conditions will have access to DVA funded medical treatment while their claim is processed. DVA is developing PAMT provider communications and will circulate through peak body and Primary Health Network channels shortly.

Transitioning ADF members – education and career support

Defence Transition Support is a mandatory command-led coaching approach which supports ADF members to take ownership of planning for their post-ADF future. Access to career and employment related benefits is available to ADF members via the Career Transition Assistance Scheme based on their length of service and reason for leaving. ADF members can access the Scheme during transition and up to 12 months after discharge.

The ADF Transition Coaching service delivery model which commenced 1 July 2017 has improved engagement with ADF personnel and inclusion of families in transition activities, and improved information sharing with the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation. The Transition for Employment (T4E) Program assists members with complex needs medically transitioning from the ADF to establish and maintain meaningful civilian employment. A small tri-service T4E pilot will roll out nationally from July 2018.

DVA's Rehabilitation Program considers all aspects of a person's life and aims to return them to a similar health, personal and vocational status before they were injured or became ill. It is complementary to primary and allied health treatment, and can assist individuals to coordinate their medical treatment, maximise their independent functioning and quality of life, and return to work when they are ready.

The Prime Minister's Veterans Employment Program established in 2016 aims to raise awareness amongst Australian businesses of the unique skills and experience that veterans can bring to the civilian workplace (see www.veteransemployment.gov.au for more info).

Veterans' and Medicine Advice and Therapeutics Education Services (MATES) Program

Funded by DVA since 2004, the MATES program is a data driven health promotion program delivering best practice evidence based medicines and health information tailored for veterans and their healthcare team. The program uses DVA health claims data (over 10 years) to identify veterans' real life problems with medicine use and health care, and provides advice to general practitioners (GPs).

The program delivers evidence-based information comprising a targeted tailored letter and education material for veterans and their GPs, allied health care providers and residential aged care facilities (RACF). To date, 50 therapeutic topics (interventions) have been

delivered reaching on average per topic 40,000 veterans; 10,000 GPs; 8,500 pharmacies; and 2,600 RACFs. Attendees were invited to provide suggestions for future topics.

2018 DVA Budget measure 'Improved Dental and Allied Health'

Attendees were referred to the Budget Factsheet at

www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/about%20dva/budgets/2018-19/dentalallied2.pdf

The package seeks to rebalance DVA's purchasing arrangements for dental and allied health services, and will be implemented in a phased approach. Aims of the package are to strengthen general practitioner (GP) engagement and assessment, and ensure only clinically necessary allied health services are provided.

The new treatment cycle initiative in particular generated discussion, generally it was felt to be a positive development, supporting the whole healthcare team to regularly review patients to ensure treatment is appropriate. The meeting noted it is even more important for clients with a chronic health condition to have ongoing contact with their GP.

The treatment cycle regime is just one of a number of strategies to ensure the right clinical treatment at the right time. There is no hard cap, clients will be able to access however many treatment cycles are clinically required. DVA's compliance framework for the new treatment cycle initiative will complement existing audit activities, including detecting outlier behaviour. Peak body input will be critical for the design process to implement the measure, and will be workshopped at the next Forum meeting, 22 August 2018.

Chief Health Officer and Health Programs Update

The Chief Health Officer provided an overview of his work with veterans and peak bodies to raise awareness of veteran health care issues. Dr Gardner's regular Vet Affairs article generates a lot of veteran correspondence which helps shine a light on complex issues he can help navigate a way through. Engagement activities of interest include:

1. Invictus Games, October 2018. A series of conferences and workshops will run alongside the games, including the Veterans' Ministers Round Table.
2. The CVC Mental Health pilot is underway in Bundaberg and will be rolled out further, to look at chronic pain associated with mild mental stress. Legislative changes made to extend CVC eligibility for the trial from Gold Card holders to White Card holders.
3. Veteran Centric Reform (VCR) transformation. Veterans' MyService claims platform – 40 streamlined medical conditions can now be accepted.

Other DVA Health Program items of interest discussed include:

- *DVA mental health webinar series*

DVA's mental health webinar series, a free professional development series managed by the Mental Health Professionals' Network to help practitioners respond to veterans' mental health needs, enables participants to obtain CPD points. 'Chronic pain and mental illness' is the next topic, scheduled for 14 August 2018, podcasts for previous webinars are available from the DVA YouTube channel or the At Ease Professional website. For more information go to <https://at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/professional-development/dva-webinars>

- *Review of DVA online training programs for health professionals*

Healthcare Management Advisors (HMA) has been engaged to review DVA's online mental health training courses. The review is expected to be completed in November 2018 and will examine requirements and incentives for health professionals treating veterans to undertake online professional development. While focusing on programs targeting mental health professionals the review will also include other health professionals, for example health professionals providing rehabilitation services. In scope are the existing six DVA online mental health programs (see www.dva.gov.au/providers/online-training-health-providers).

HMA is keen to engage with health peak bodies, as well as issuing an online survey targeting health professionals who both have and haven't completed DVA's online professional development programs. A number of attendees indicated interest in providing input to the review.

- *RAP Review*

DVA is undertaking a major review of the Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP), covering aids and appliances provided under RAP, as well as those supplied through rehabilitation plans for veterans who require them as part of their rehabilitation. Invitations will be issued shortly to key peak bodies to join the Review's Advisory Panel. The Review project team will provide regular updates to and seek feedback from the Forum.

Forum Work Program

The Forum's Terms of Reference will be updated shortly to note three items for the Forum's 2018 work program, to be workshopped by the end of the year:

1. Implementation of the Budget Initiative 'Improved Dental and Allied Health'
2. RAP Review; and
3. Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC).

Next meeting

The next Forum meeting will be held on 22 August 2018, with a videoconference discussion to be chaired from Canberra.