

DVA HEALTH PROVIDERS PARTNERSHIP FORUM: Meeting Summary 2/2018, 12 April 2018

The second DVA Health Providers Partnership Forum for 2018 was opened by the new Chair, First Assistant Secretary, DVA Health and Community Services Division. She led a discussion about the way forward for the Forum, including revised Terms of Reference to support collaborative problem solving rather than just information exchange, opening up future meetings to interested peak bodies, and development of the Forum's 2018 Work Program. Attendees were invited to submit their top three topics for inclusion in the program.

The Forum was advised the HCS Health Provider Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Strategic Plan had been finalised and an implementation plan was in development. Attendees brainstormed ideas for the plan through a discussion of two case studies on hearing services and supporting providers to advertise their services to the veteran community.

DVA data on client health treatments

Attendees heard a presentation about the Departmental Management Information System (DMIS) functionality and discussed a sample data report on DVA funded health treatments usage. Attendees were asked to provide feedback about the sample, to check its suitability as a basis for profession-specific data reports that can be used in future Forum discussions.

Update on Veteran Centric Reform

Veteran Centric Reform team members highlighted DVA's progress in reforming processes, systems and culture to achieve faster, improved claims processing and more insightful client care.

Initiatives include a client portal for online claiming to significantly cut processing times. There are now 3,500 DVA clients registered with 'MyService' and all users will have access to a digital DVA Health Card by late 2018. These "smart cards" will be available on MyService users' phones to show their health provider.

Another initiative is a DVA staff portal that will provide an improved and more holistic view of our clients' histories, and will improve our advice and support to providers. DVA is also using data-driven insights and analytics to proactively identify at-risk clients so we can assist them earlier.

DVA client flag in National Health Services Directory (NHSD)

DVA is working with Healthdirect Australia to establish a flag in the NHSD that lets veterans and their families find local providers who are likely to welcome DVA clients. The Forum discussed pros and cons for providers to either opt in or opt out of being included under the flag. DVA said it preferred providers to 'opt-out' and in so doing be asked to complete an exit survey, as an opportunity for DVA to collect solid evidence as to why health professionals might choose to not provide services to DVA Health Card holders. Attendees were invited to let DVA know their preference for activating the flag.

DVA White Card on Transition Project

By 1 July 2018 all ADF members who separate from Defence will receive a DVA White Card, to make it easy to access mental health treatments without the need to claim beforehand. Providers were reminded to contact the DVA hot line on 1800 550 457 or email health.approval@dva.gov.au on first presentation of a white card.

Centenary of Anzac Centre, Practitioner Support Service

Phoenix Australia gave a presentation to the Forum about the new Centenary of Anzac Centre, which is dedicated to excellence in mental health treatment for veterans. It will establish and operate a Treatment Research Collaboration and a national Practitioner Support Service, to provide guidance to practitioners and veteran support agencies. The Centre will engage with the health sector through peak bodies, VVCS regional contacts and the Mental Health Professionals' Network.

Applied Research Program (ARP) Update

The first two of the Transition and Wellbeing Research Programme's eight reports, *Mental Health Prevalence* and *Pathways to Care*, were released on 5 April 2018. Additional reports are expected in late 2018. Several literature reviews are also underway, about alternative therapies, healthy ageing, and veterans' participation in sport. DVA's partnership with the Australian Health and Welfare Institute (AIHW) is focussed on strengthening our understanding of veteran health and welfare, including causes of death, incidences of suicide, veteran demographics.

Updates from Chief Health Officer and Health Programs

The Chief Health Officer discussed a range of issues of concern to providers, including addressing incidents where clinically inappropriate services are provided to veterans, although this is rare; additions to the RPBS (i.e. Arginaid and Souvenaid); and drawing on the expertise of DVA's clinical advisors to support beneficial decision making for DVA clients. He noted his new title reflects DVA's expanded focus on holistic health, not only medical or other treatments.

Forum members were advised of an amendment to the *DVA Notes for Allied Health Providers* to clarify that providers are unable to claim for services provided by students. DVA will provide further guidance for providers about this policy.

Other Business

A range of other business matters were discussed, including:

- The Provisional Treatment Project starts in June 2018. Clients who lodge a MRCA or DRCA claim for one or more 20 specific conditions will have access to medical (not allied health) treatment while the claim is processed. Details will be released to providers.
- About 1,000 health providers who have provided services to DVA clients have their payments being held by DHS as the agency does not have up-to-date bank details for them.
- DVA is developing a provider satisfaction survey and will seek attendees' feedback.
- DVA is undertaking a major review of the Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP), focussing not only on the Schedule but the whole program. The Review will consider linkages with other Australian Government programs such as the NDIS and Aged Care.
- DVA's Rehabilitation team will present to a future Forum meeting about vocational support for transitioning ADF members, given the link between work and improved mental health.
- The CVC Mental Health Pilot will start recruiting DVA White Card holders from late April, and the pilot practice arrangements are currently being tested in Bundaberg. DVA will work with PHNs to rollout the pilot to up to 10 regional areas (locations are not yet confirmed).

The Chair advised the next Forum meeting would be held on 8 June 2018, with a videoconference discussion to be chaired from Canberra.