



HEALTH PROVIDERS PARTNERSHIP FORUM (HPPF) MEETING SUMMARY - 23 June 2023

Agenda Item	Discussion
<p>1. Open meeting; Action Items Update</p>	<p>HPPF Chair opened the meeting, introduced the new Deputy Chief Health Officer, and provided an update on one action item:</p> <p>Open Arms: The Australian Association of Psychologists Inc. requested training for members. It was noted Open Arms provides free online professional development and training to help clinicians better support the mental health needs of veterans. The Chair noted Open Arms would investigate this matter further.</p>
<p>2. Improvements to Diabetes and MGF Program arrangements</p>	<p>DVA Director Care and Assistance, provided an update on improvements to the Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) diabetes arrangements and Medical Grade Footwear (MGF) Program. This is to ensure the programs remain fit for purpose to meet DVA clients' clinical needs and provide clear guidance for assessing health providers.</p> <p>Changes include new and improved order forms and National Guidelines; updated supplier lists and amended referral processes. For further details, please refer to these DVA Provider News articles on MGF and diabetes.</p> <p>Further MGF Program activities are underway including updating the MGF Register with more modern MGF items; and reviewing the MGF Schedule of Fees and MGF contracting model. Inquiries to HPPF Secretariat at primary.health.provider.engagement@dva.gov.au</p>
<p>3. Wellbeing Policy Update</p>	<p>Assistant Secretary Wellbeing Policy Branch provided an update on a number of Wellbeing Policy topics:</p> <p><u>Budget</u></p> <p>Supporting Veterans – Volunteer Training in Suicide Recognition and Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2 million over two years for mental health literacy and suicide intervention training. <p>Cross portfolio measures – Department of Health & Aged Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key measures with positive impacts for veterans and their families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting Bulk Billing in General Practice (Veterans' Access Payment – see below) ○ MyMedicare (voluntary patient registration)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Lowering the cost of medicines through changes to maximum dispensing quantities<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ \$1.6 billion savings for patients over four years (\$46.6 million for Veteran Cardholders)○ Urgent Care Clinics○ Funding pay increases for Aged Care Workers, including Veterans' Home Care and Community Nursing providers. <p>Veterans' Access Payment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● \$33.3 million for DVA over four years.● Triples current bulk billing incentive - and the corresponding Veterans' Access Payment - for certain GP attendances, from 1 November 2023.● Increased VAP for some telehealth services, for veterans registered with MyMedicare <p>Increase to Veterans' Home Care and Community Nursing Fees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● \$82.5 million over four years for Veterans' Home Care and Community Nursing. <p><u>CVC Program</u></p> <p>The evaluation of the CVC Program will cover effectiveness of outcomes; impact on the wellbeing of DVA clients; and options to redesign the program to better manage chronic disease.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 2020-21 Budget funding provided to undertake evaluation in 2023.● Abt Associates engaged to conduct the evaluation.● Consultation with clinicians and veteran community will occur in Q1 2023-24.
<p>4. Maximising eligible DVA clients' access to clinically necessary care</p>	<p>Senior Medical Advisor and Assistant Director Health Entitlements presented on veteran health care entitlements and the unique prior approval system. Attendees were referred to a suite of 'Quick Tips' for health providers, which are available on the DVA website and provide a handy guide to DVA health arrangements.</p> <p><u>Health Cards</u></p> <p>Veteran Gold, White and Orange health cards reflect DVA clients' accepted conditions and define their access to a wide range of DVA-funded medical, dental and allied health entitlements, and support programs. For further information, refer to the DVA website page for providers, What a DVA health card covers and Information go GPs, Practice Nurses and Primary Healthcare Providers.</p> <p><u>Prior Approvals</u></p> <p>Providers may need to submit to DVA a '<i>request for prior approval</i>' for funding before providing veteran patients with certain treatment and services, as follows:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• service does not have an item number under the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS)• provider charge is more than the fee stated in the DVA Schedule of Fees for that item• service is highlighted in relevant DVA Schedule of Fees as needing prior approval• some medicines and dental, and admission to non-DVA contracted hospitals/centres <p>Further details are available at When DVA must approve care. If a provider is concerned about the timing of approval and their patient's access to necessary treatment, they are advised to contact DVA Health Approvals (1800 550 457) to indicate the urgency of the request.</p>
5. Deputy Secretary Update	<p>Deputy Secretary Veterans and Family Services Group provided an update on:</p> <p><u>Legislative Reform</u></p> <p>The Australian Government invested \$9.5 million in 2022-23 to develop a pathway for simplifying veterans' legislation. The pathway proposes an improved Military Rehabilitation and <i>Compensation Act</i> (MRCA) as the sole ongoing Act. All benefits under existing schemes will continue unaffected, with only new claims or claims relating to deteriorated conditions to instead be covered by the single ongoing Act. Public consultation was undertaken from 16 February 2023 and closed on 12 May 2023, which will help to inform the way forward for the initiative.</p> <p><u>Claims Backlog</u></p> <p>The Australian Government has committed more than \$220 million for 500 frontline staff to cut claims waiting times and fix the backlog of claims. The peak of the backlog reached 45,226 at the end of September 2022. As at 30 April 2023 that number was down to 36,271. The number of decisions on claims being made has also continued to improve, with a total of 100,933 decisions made to the end of April 2023 – a 36 per cent increase on the previous year.</p> <p><u>Streamlining Claims Forms</u></p> <p>As part of the multipronged effort to reduce claims backlog, DVA is also looking at how to improve the quality of the claims submitted so they can be processed faster. The project focuses on the forms used for compensation particularly permanent impairment. Health providers have long complained about these forms, and they can even be a deterrent for providers to complete the necessary medical reports. Providers' ideas, suggestions or comments are welcome. Please submit to the HPPF Secretariat at primary.health.provider.engagement@dva.gov.au</p>
7. Meeting wrap up	Participants' survey undertaken



8. DVA Provider News articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change to DVA's website for providers Department of Veterans' Affairs• Veteran health issues prioritised at DVA peak body forum Department of Veterans' Affairs• Increased fees for Veterans' Home Care and Community Nursing Department of Veterans' Affairs (dva.gov.au)• It's now easier to prescribe Medical Grade Footwear (MGF) for veterans Department of Veterans' Affairs (dva.gov.au)• Improving veteran access to clinically necessary diabetes products. Department of Veterans' Affairs (dva.gov.au)•
9. Next Meeting	The next HPPF meeting is scheduled for 22 November 2023