



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs

# COMMUNITY NURSING NEWSLETTER No. 49



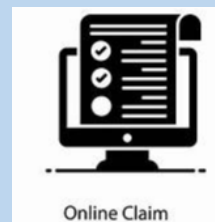
## September 2024

The **Community Nursing Newsletter** is issued to provide updates to Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Community Nursing providers about DVA's Community Nursing Program.

### Sustainability Payments

A reminder to providers that sustainability payments are calculated based on the number of unique clients community nursing providers **received payment for** during each month of the preceding quarter. DVA encourages providers to submit claims in a timely manner each month to ensure all eligible claims can be processed so that payments are captured in each of the three months in the quarterly period. The amount for community nursing services is calculated at a rate of \$90 per client per month (amounts are GST exclusive). Any questions regarding the sustainability payments, including further information about how the payments have been calculated, can be emailed to [dva.sustainability.payments@dva.gov.au](mailto:dva.sustainability.payments@dva.gov.au).

Submitting claims online is the preferred method to claim for community nursing services as it provides a number of efficiencies for health care providers. Online claiming will allow timely payment for claims compared to manual claims, which has a known delay in processing. A list of software compatible with community nursing claiming is available on the [Services Australia website](#). You can find the software suited for your needs by looking for those marked with a tick under DVA claiming in the table.



DVA invites providers eligible for a sustainability payment for the April - June 2024 quarter to submit your invoice for processing if you have not already done so.

To ensure the relevant person receives notifications regarding sustainability payments, please check that DVA has your correct contact details. If any changes are required, please inform DVA via email at: [community.nursing.contracts@dva.gov.au](mailto:community.nursing.contracts@dva.gov.au)

Invoices can be sent to [dva.sustainability.payments@dva.gov.au](mailto:dva.sustainability.payments@dva.gov.au) for processing. Further information on sustainability payments, including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), is available on the [DVA website](#).

### Increased fees for Veterans' Home Care and Community Nursing

DVA is continuing to support the Fair Work Commission's (FWC) decisions on the Aged Care Work Value Case (ACWVC).

As part of the Australian Government's commitment to fund the FWC's ACWVC Stage 3 decision to further increase award wages for aged care workers, the fees for the Veterans' Home Care (VHC) and Community Nursing programs will be increased.

#### Implementing funding for the Veterans' Home Care and Community Nursing programs

##### *Fee increases*

The Government has provided \$19.5 million for DVA's VHC and Community Nursing programs to support providers to pay the increased award wages, to cover services delivered by the following workers:

- personal care workers
- home care workers
- assistants in nursing.

The VHC and Community Nursing (for personal care fee items) Schedule of Fees will be updated to reflect the Fair Work Commission's Stage 3 decision to increase award wages for services delivered by workers under the in-scope awards.

The increase to VHC and Community Nursing fees will be from 1 January 2025 for all services delivered under the VHC Program, and for personal care services delivered under the Community Nursing Program, for claim periods commencing on or after this date. A further increase will occur on 1 October 2025, for all claim periods commencing on or after this date. This approach aligns with the FWC's directions.

#### *Historical leave liabilities*

Additional funding will also be made available to VHC and Community Nursing providers to fund historical leave liabilities as a result of the FWC's decision. DVA will only fund these for VHC and Community Nursing providers who are not entitled to receive funding through the Department of Health and Aged Care for providers who deliver services under Aged Care programs. Further information on how to claim will be provided in upcoming Newsletters as funding arrangements are finalised.

## Claiming Exceptional Case and Schedule of Fees Items

Providers seeking Exceptional Case approval are reminded Exceptional Case applications must include all required care that a client requires during a claim period. For example, where a client requires overnight care as well as care during the day, the EC application should include daytime and overnight care, and the overnight care must not be claimed through the Schedule of Fees. This allows the client's care needs to be assessed holistically and ensure the client's full clinically required nursing and personal care needs are met.

Where a community nursing provider delivers services under the Schedule of Fees and is waiting for the outcome of an application for Exceptional Case status, services delivered will be taken into consideration when assessing the Exceptional Case application.

Other items including Assessment (NA02), Bereavement follow-up (NA03), Additional Travel (NA10), and Nursing Consumables (NC10-NC70) are the only Schedule of Fees item numbers that can be claimed in the same period as an Exceptional Case item number (NO65 or NO70), where appropriate to do so.



## National Nursing Workforce Strategy

The draft National Nursing Workforce Strategy has been released for the purpose of seeking feedback from people and organisations with an interest in the nursing workforce. The draft strategy has been developed with input from 6,000 stakeholders and aligns with reforms and strategies that affect the nursing profession.

The Department of Health and Aged Care invite you to provide your feedback on the draft strategy through an online survey that is open from 11 September 2024 until midnight 20 October 2024.

Please visit the survey at <https://consultations.health.gov.au/health-workforce/nnws> or scan the QR code to access the survey.



For any questions on the National Nursing Workforce Strategy, please contact [NNWS@health.gov.au](mailto:NNWS@health.gov.au)



## Exceptional Cases – provision of services

Where a client requires care that is outside the Community Nursing [Schedule of Fees](#), approval must be sought from DVA through the [Exceptional Case \(EC\) process](#) and prior approval given for the care to be funded.

Where an EC application has been submitted, services to the client should continue within the limits of the Community Nursing [Schedule of Fees](#). If services are not yet in place, DVA recommend that appropriate services should commence in line with the Community Nursing [Schedule of Fees](#).

To ensure clients are not without community nursing services while an EC application is being determined, current services should continue while awaiting the outcome.

***If Community Nursing providers are unable to continue or commence services immediately, they must inform DVA as soon as possible.***

### Urgent circumstances

Where **urgent** circumstances apply, such as end of life palliative care, Community Nursing providers can request urgent interim approval prior to submitting an EC application.

A one-off interim approval can be granted where urgent circumstances arise, and the client requires care outside of the Schedule of Fees. In these situations, a Community Nursing provider can email the [Exceptional Cases](#) mailbox and must provide the following details:

- Number of visits required per day including length (minutes), type (clinical or personal), number of staff and personnel type per visit
- Palliative Care assessment detailing the phase of palliation (if applicable)
- Medication authority and/or list of medications (if to be administered by the Community Nursing provider)
- Hospital discharge summary where relevant.

Where urgent interim approval is granted, the provider is required to submit an Exceptional Case application within 2 business days to enable processing within the interim period.

Further information can be found in Attachment A of the [Notes for Community Nursing Providers](#).

## Primary Health Care Training Program

DVA has worked with Medcast to deliver a suite of training for health providers to assist in developing a better understanding of Veterans' healthcare needs and the available supports through DVA. In addition to courses and webinars, there are blogs and a resource page, including links to [DVA Quick Guides](#).

The modules are freely available to participants at no cost and are accessible from Medcast Learning Hub at [VETs HeLP: Veterans Healthcare eLearning Platform](#).

