

Briefing Note and Key Messages for PRVHC Board Members: Veterans and Veteran Support

Definition

The term "Veteran" includes Canada's war service Veterans - the men and women who served during the First World War, the Second World War and the Korean War - and also former Canadian Forces members in recognition of their service to Canada.

Different VAC policies and benefits apply to the various categories of Veterans. For the purpose of qualifying for treatment benefits and long-term care, the major categories of Veterans are:

Overseas Service Veterans (OSVs) – those Veterans who served in an actual theatre of war during World War I, World War II or Korea; or were members of the Merchant Navy during these same conflicts; or are Allied Veterans who meet specific provisions of the War Veterans Allowance Act;

Canada Service Veterans (CSVs) – those Veterans who served on full-time active service other than service in a theatre of actual war as a member of the Canadian Forces or similar forces raised in Newfoundland, or who were Merchant Mariners but not members of the Merchant Navy and who served for a minimum of 365 days during WW I or WW II; are 65 years of age or more; and satisfy the income requirement of an income-qualified Veteran; and

Canadian Forces Veterans – those members of the Canadian Armed Forces (other than War Service Veterans) who, in respect of a pensioned condition or a disability for which they are entitled to a disability award to the extent that those benefits are not available to them as a member or former member of the Canadian Forces.

The Veteran Population

As of September 30, 2013, the VAC is supporting 8,158 Veterans in 1,634 long-term care facilities:

- 5,291 are in community beds in 1,599 facilities;
- 2,524 are in contract beds in 143 facilities; and
- 343 are at Ste. Anne's Hospital.

Note: Community and contract beds are often found in the same facility.

Ottawa Area Veterans

The VAC Statistics Unit indicates that the approximate number of Veterans living in the Ottawa area as of June 30th, 2013 was as follows:

- Number of Veterans (within 50 kms of Ottawa):
 - 4900 War Service Veterans,
 - 50,000 veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces.
- Number of VAC clients in the Ottawa area:

- 2,161 War Service Veterans,
 - 5,628 Canadian Armed Forces Veterans who receive VAC benefits through the Ottawa Area Office.
- Number of Veterans in the area receiving VAC support for Long Term Care:
 - 432 War Service Veterans (197 in community beds, 235 in contract beds),
 - 24 Canadian Armed Forces Veterans (all in community beds).

Note: The number of WWII and Korea Veterans will significantly decline over the next decade, particularly during the period 2015-2020.

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) Mandate

VAC's mandate stems from laws and regulations, most significantly the *Department of Veterans Affairs Act*, which charges the Minister with responsibility for "...the care, treatment, or re-establishment in civil life of any person who served in the Canadian Forces or merchant navy or in the naval, army or air forces or merchant navies of Her Majesty, of any person who has otherwise engaged in pursuits relating to war, and of any other person designated ... and the care of the dependants or survivors of any person referred to ...". VAC programs include such things as disability pensions, Veterans' allowances, pension advocacy, health care and commemoration.

Veterans Support

Veterans Affairs Canada provides financial assistance to eligible Veterans for long term care. Eligibility varies depending on type & location of military service, income, health care need and/or link to service-related disability.

Veterans eligible for a *contract or community* bed or a bed at Ste. Anne's Hospital include:

- War Veterans who served overseas, or are income qualified or need care due to a disability related to military service;
- Allied Veterans whose needs cannot be met in a community bed;

Veterans eligible for care in *community* bed only:

- Veterans who served in Canada only, over the age of 65 and who are income qualified;
- Allied Veterans; or
- Canadian Forces Veterans who need care due to a disability related to military

Long-Term Care

Every eligible Veteran who requires long-term care may receive VAC financial support for the costs associated with such care. Eligibility for long-term care support is based on the Veteran's service and health needs and may include various types of long-term care in different provinces. VAC's long-term

care program complements existing provincial long-term care programs, meaning that costs are shared between provincial governments, VAC and the Veterans themselves.

The three main long-term care settings in Canada are:

- Community beds located in community facilities providing nursing home care to Veterans as well as other provincial residents;
- Contract beds in community facilities (such as PRVHC) designated for priority access for eligible Veterans; and
- Departmental beds located at [Ste Anne's Hospital](#).

Ontario LTC Facilities

There are a number of nursing homes and long term care facilities in Ontario currently providing contract beds to VAC:

- Sunnybrook in Toronto;
- Parkwood in London (part of St. Joseph's Health Care Centre);
- Perley Rideau in Ottawa; and
- Other (mainly smaller) nursing homes and long term care facilities across the province.

Veterans Accommodation and Meals

With some exceptions, Veterans in long term care are required to pay for the cost of accommodation and meals, up to a maximum monthly amount. An accommodation and meals contribution is defined as the portion of the provincial fee for long term care that some eligible Veterans are responsible for paying.

Consistent with the Veterans Health Care Regulations, the Veteran's household income is taken into consideration in the calculation of the monthly maximum accommodation and meal contribution. Income is calculated from a number of sources including Old Age Security benefits, pension income, and Canada/Quebec Pension Plan benefits. Exemptions for personal comforts, spousal support, and dependents are then calculated and applied. The remaining income, if any after subtracting the total exemptions from the total income, is the Veteran's accommodation and meals contribution up to the maximum amount.

In addition, not all Veterans are required to contribute towards accommodation and meals fees. Veterans who are in long term care due to a disability related to military service or those who are considered seriously disabled (pensioned in excess of 78%) do not have to pay an accommodation and meals fee.

PRVHC: In the case of the PRVHC (and the other two main Veteran's facilities) the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) provides a per diem for Veterans for nursing and personal care which is 50% higher than the per diem provided for community residents (note: other per diems are the same). This arrangement was put in place by the then Minister (Elizabeth Witmer) in response to political pressure to "treat Veterans better".

To top up this funding, VAC provides additional funds to enhance levels of care, programs and services for Veterans that are not covered as part of provincially insured health care. These funds must be used for the purposes they are provided or returned to VAC as part of an annual verification process.

VAC funds the Perley Rideau for about half of the accommodation costs for Veterans. Veterans pay at the national standard rate for veterans, which is about half of what a person in a community bed would pay. VAC also provides additional funds for the Arts & Crafts program for veterans (for example, most of the cost of the wood working shop and ceramic shop are paid for from this funding).

VAC shared in the capital cost of the Perley Rideau but will not pay for future capital investments.

The Future: The declining number of World War II and Korean War Veterans will have a significant impact on long-term care centres like Perley Rideau. As a result, the PRVHC BoD directed the development and implementation of a Veterans Transition Plan to expand services towards the community at large and to convert long-term beds to sub-acute beds or housing with assisted living services. Once completed, the plan will help guide the transition of Perley Rideau from a predominantly Veterans population to one with a higher proportion of community residents, including seniors who are Veterans of the Canadian Forces.

That said, PRVHC has also clearly committed to maintaining its proud heritage as an important centre for Veterans' care and ensuring its rental policies contain a provision for the preferred rental of units to Canadian Forces Veterans of the Regular Forces or Primary Reserve.

Key Messages for the PRVHC Board:

Despite the changes occurring in Canada's Veteran population, PRVHC will continue to ensure there will always be a place for Veterans at Perley Rideau.

The Perley Rideau honours, values and will continue to provide excellent care and services to Canada's current and future Veterans as they become seniors.

Early development and approval of a Veteran's Transition Plan in cooperation with the Ontario MOHLTC, the Champlain LHIN and VAC will be critical to ensure Perley Rideau can meet the needs of current and future Veterans.

Briefing Note prepared by: Stakeholder and Community Relations Committee, October 2013