

REHABILITATION SERVICES AND VOCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – NATIONAL CONTRACT with Partners in Canadian Veterans Rehabilitation Services (PCVRS)

- The contract with PCVRS provides rehabilitation focused services that are, innovative and nationally consistent for Veterans and their families.
- The national contract for the delivery of rehabilitation services awarded to Partners in Canadian Veterans Rehabilitation Services (PCVRS) in June 2021 and became fully operational October 2023.
- VAC has always contracted external organizations to deliver professional rehabilitation services so Veterans and their families have timely access to rehabilitation specialists.
- Case Managers remain pivotal in the rehabilitation process. In the service delivery model with PCVRS they have more time to provide direct support to Veterans and their families, increasing positive rehabilitation and case management outcomes.
- The *Quality Management and Performance Measurement Framework* implemented with the contract provides VAC with significantly more information to better support participants, ensure quality service delivery, and make program improvements.

WHEN PRESSED:

Q1 – Why was a new rehabilitation contract initiated with Partners in Canadian Veterans Rehabilitation Services (PCVRS)?

Historically, services offered under the Rehabilitation Program were administered through two different contracts. Having one national contractor to administer all medical, psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation services provides a consistent level of service delivery with improved performance measurement and quality assurance.

Q2 – How will VAC ensure the contract with PCVRS remains responsive and effective to meet the needs of Veterans and their families?

The service delivery model was designed with quality and performance as a priority. The new *Quality Management and Performance Measurement Framework* offers daily reports on contractor and VAC performance while measuring the quality of services provided. Additionally, participant feedback is collected at three points throughout a participant's Rehabilitation Plan process on various components of their service delivery experience.

Q3 – Has the role of Case Managers changed in the new service delivery model?

The role of VAC Case Managers has not changed. Case Managers remain the primary decision maker for the Rehabilitation Program and still approve Rehabilitation Plans, monitor rehabilitation progress, and coordinate participants' case management needs.

Q4 – Are there delays in Veterans receiving services from PCVRS?

Veterans are being assigned to PCVRS rehabilitation service specialists within 24 hours of their referral to PCVRS. PCVRS continues to expand their national network of rehabilitation services professionals to meet participant needs amidst national challenges being experienced in healthcare.

Q5 – What specific challenges or concerns were addressed in ACVA's report (*New Contract for the Administration of VAC's Rehabilitation Program*), and how does VAC's response address these issues to ensure the quality of service delivery and the role of Case Managers?

The response to ACVA's report regarding the new contract was tabled in the House of Commons in October 2023. It addresses ten recommendations, primarily focusing on VAC's communication approach to employees, unions, stakeholders, and participants throughout project implementation. A subsequent response regarding the impacts of the rehabilitation contract on service delivery to veterans was provided in November 2023.

BACKGROUND — REHABILITATION SERVICES AND VOCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM –NATIONAL CONTRACTOR

The vision of Veterans Affairs Canada's Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Assistance Program (RSVP) is for participants to achieve optimal levels of health, functioning, and participation through evidence informed approaches. The program aims to improve the well-being of Veterans and their families by reducing barriers to re-establishment in their post-service life. The Program provides Veteran-centered rehabilitation services and benefits through a rehabilitation-focused case management approach.

There are three components in the Rehabilitation Program; medical, psycho-social and vocational rehabilitation. Previously, vocational rehabilitation was provided by one national contractor, while medical and psycho-social services were offered through multiple service providers in the community.

The new Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Assistance Program contract was awarded in June 2021. The new contract with a national contractor will enhance the Veteran experience and improve their well-being. Requirements of the new contract include:

- a) Services that are customized to each Veteran and family member's unique background and needs, including Indigenous or culturally sensitive approaches and methods.
- b) Continued access to rehabilitation services in Veterans and family members' language of choice.
- c) 24/7 access to a participant portal, where Veterans and family members can submit claims, view their Rehabilitation Plan, manage appointments and access resources and training.
- d) A trained Rehabilitation Service Specialist (RSS) assigned to support Veterans, family members and Case Managers through the rehabilitation journey by recommending rehabilitation assessments and services for approval, coordinating appointments, gathering documentation and supporting the processing of claims for rehabilitation expenses.
- e) Veterans and family members will have the chance to share their experiences and satisfaction with the program—input that will help VAC make sure that the Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Assistance Program is the best it can be.

Throughout the procurement process VAC facilitated multiple consultations with industry, internal subject matter experts including front-line delivery staff, union representatives and external stakeholders.

These consultations continued throughout the implementation of the contract and have been expanded to include Rehabilitation Program participants who identify as Indigenous, racialized groups, LGBTQ2+ and persons with a disability, to ensure our service delivery is inclusive and equitable.

All Veterans found eligible for RSVP are referred to PCVRS to have their rehabilitation needs assessed. Services for newly eligible and migrated participants have moved to the new contractor. Collaboration between VAC and PCVRS is ongoing to ensure Veterans have a smooth transition to the new service delivery model.

In October 2022, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) adopted a motion to commence a study of the Impact of the New Rehabilitation Contract Awarded by the Department of Veterans Affairs on the Role of the Case Manager and Quality of Service Delivery. ACVA tabled their report (*New Contract for the Administration of VAC's Rehabilitation Program*) June 14, 2023. VAC has responded to ten of the recommendations that largely focused on VAC's communication approach to employees, union, stakeholders and participants throughout project implementation.