



The Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen & Women Ltd  
(Incorporated in the ACT)

## **TPI FEDERATION AUSTRALIA**

**“Disabled in our Service, United in our Cause”**

As an addendum to my report in this issue of your magazine I provide information from the DVA Secretary, Liz Cosson AM CSC, on the recent rumour of changes in the pharmaceutical prior approval system that is utilised by DVA.

If any TPI/SR DVA client has an issue with their medications not receiving the appropriate approval, or any medications, as they have previously, can you please contact the TPI Federation President at [federation@tpifed.org.au](mailto:federation@tpifed.org.au) or call 0417 291 546. Also watch our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/tpifed](http://www.facebook.com/tpifed) for further updates.

The information from the Secretary states –

“Recently the Minister and several ex-service organisations received a letter regarding the changes to the Veterans’ Affairs Pharmaceutical Advisory Centre (VAPAC) that held some factual inaccuracies. VAPAC is often referred to as the Pharmaceutical Phone Hotline and allows GPs and other health professionals to seek authority to prescribe veterans a range of pharmaceutical items including medicines and other products from the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS).

I would like to reassure you that DVA is not changing services delivered from VAPAC. There will be no reductions in current service delivery arrangements for health providers utilising the VAPAC service to treat their veteran patients.

There are however, some changes planned to the VAPAC workforce arrangements from 1 April 2021. These changes stem from DVA reviewing service delivery arrangements for pharmaceutical programs leading up to the end of the current contract arrangements. The review highlighted an opportunity to change the composition of the workforce based on the nature of calls being received by VAPAC. This will ensure VAPAC staff under the new arrangements have the appropriate qualifications and experience to manage the calls that they receive.

As such, DVA is engaging individuals with pharmacy assistant qualifications to undertake VAPAC phone calls funded through DVA’s RPBS.

VAPAC will continue to operate as business as usual with the 24/7 (1800 552 580) phone line remaining in full operation out of the DVA Brisbane office. The pharmacy assistants will not be engaged via Bupa as incorrectly referenced in the letter. The VAPAC will continue to be managed by DVA.

Pharmacy assistants will be supported by qualified and registered pharmacists, who will continue to provide advice for complex pharmaceutical matters. All matters that require the involvement of a pharmacist will continue to be handled by a pharmacist.

Importantly, there are no changes to funding access for pharmaceuticals through the RPBS. The RPBS continues to offer an extensive range of medications and wound care items to eligible veterans, their dependents and widows/widowers.

Veterans should continue to visit their treating doctor in accordance with their treatment plan and to access their pharmaceutical scripts.

I understand the information contained in the letter may have caused some concerns in some parts of the veteran community, but please be assured there are no changes to the service offered through VAPAC.

Regards,

Liz

**Liz Cosson AM CSC**

Secretary

**Department of Veterans’**

**Affairs**

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