

Introduction

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has long recognised the importance and status of the role of Local Medical Officers (LMOs) and General Practitioners (GPs) in caring for the health of the veteran community. Generally, a veteran's GP is their primary health care professional, and it would be uncommon for a veteran not to either visit or consult with their GP on a regular basis, given the health care needs of many veterans.

The Department is well aware of the changing demographics of GPs across Australia, where an increasing reliance upon International Medical Graduates (IMGs) in rural and remote regions is adding to an already diverse mix of GPs. Further, the ranks of GPs are constantly renewed by newly graduated GPs. Combined, these and other factors reflect a situation where some GPs may be unaware of the unique health care needs of the veteran community, or of the health services funded by DVA.

DVA is constantly examining methods to improve communication with GPs, specifically, how to raise their awareness of the various DVA-funded health services available to their veteran patients.

To assist in addressing this, DVA has developed an *Information for Medical Practitioners* package, particularly aimed at newly graduating GPs, those practising in rural and regional areas, and GPs who are IMGs. Moreover, it can be utilised as a 'refresher' for any GP who treats members of the veteran community.

The package consists of:

- an Introduction;
- three information modules;
- a list of web links to information referred to in the modules;
- two useful DVA reference documents - the *DVA Funded Health Services* and *DVA Treatment Entitlement Cards* Charts; and
- a feedback form.

The modules, which can be used either individually or sequentially, consist of:

Module 1: *Introduction to DVA*

Module 2: *DVA's Health Programs – Hospital, Medical and Allied Health Services*

Module 3: *DVA's Health Programs – Health and Related Services*

The package is designed to be downloaded from the DVA website and the modules used either in PowerPoint presentation form as training tools by GP educators/organisations or in hard copy form, along with the other components of the package, as a reference document for individuals/practices.

The package will provide GPs (in any location) with a broad overview - a 'snapshot' - of DVA and its health services, together with relevant links and contact details to gain further detailed information.

DVA welcomes your feedback on the package, by completing and returning the feedback form, via the contacts provided on the form.

October 2009