



**VETERANS AFFAIRS CANADA (VAC)
PROGRAM OF CHOICE (POC) 08 NURSING ASSESSMENT
POC 12 OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSESSMENT
ALL PROVINCE AND TERRITORIES**

August 2023

Overview

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) would like to provide some important information regarding assessments conducted by Registered Nurses (RN) and Occupational Therapists (OT) in the Benefits and Health Services On-Line Portal (BHSOL).

This message focuses on guiding principles to help manage Veterans' expectations. We ask that RN and OT providers implement the steps outlined below. This will help streamline the process by making it, easier, faster, and a more positive experience for Veterans.

[Treatment benefits](#) or services must be prescribed or recommended by an approved health professional in accordance with the [Benefit Grids](#).

Guiding Principles

1. Prescriptions for POC 1 Aids for Daily Living, POC 7 Medical Supplies & POC 14 Vision (eye) Care

When a health need has been identified, in accordance with the benefit grid prescriber requirements, it is essential that RNs & OTs provide Veterans with prescriptions for [POC 1 - Aids for Daily Living](#), [POC 7 - Medical Supplies](#) and [POC 14 – Vision \(eye\) Care](#) (OTs) with instructions on how to obtain the item.

The Veteran will submit the prescription to a vendor of their choice. The RN/OT may also send the prescription directly to the Veteran's preferred vendor. The vendor will request pre-authorization from Medavie Blue Cross before providing the benefit item. If Veterans have questions about their health coverage (eligibility) or about the VAC treatment benefits program, they can contact [VAC](#) at 1-866-522-2122.

Important Reminder

RN/OT prescriptions and recommendations are based on **health needs**. RN/OT must inform Veterans that coverage through VAC **is dependent on eligibility**. With respect to eligibility for treatment benefits, the extent of coverage depends on several factors, including Military/RCMP service, service-related disability condition(s), health needs and individual circumstances.

The prescription must include the following details:

- a. the name and address of the client.
- b. the date the prescription was written.
- c. the prescriber's name.
- d. the name of the benefit prescribed.
- e. the quantity of the benefit prescribed.
- f. the health professionals' signature on the prescription.

The form *Request for Minor Medical Equipment and/or Medical Supplies* (VAC669) located in BHSOL can be used when a provider doesn't have their own prescription pad or form.

It is important that RN/OT providers discuss their prescriptions and recommendations with the Veteran. Providers could also educate clients on alternate funding options (private insurance, Red Cross, etc.) should the items prescribed not be covered by VAC. All recommendations should include appropriate teaching/training. The RN/OT must indicate prescriptions given on their assessment reports.

2. POC 12 OT Services Eligibility

When recommending referrals to health care professionals (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychology, nursing, etc.), RN/OT providers are asked to inform the Veteran they may or may not be eligible for funding for the assessment or treatment through VAC. Should the Veteran not be eligible through VAC, they may be referred for the service through their home organization (for still serving members), their provincial health care, or private insurance. During the assessment, the referral information should be provided to them as appropriate.

3. Scope of practice

When RN/OT identify an unmet need and the Veteran may benefit from a service or equipment to be addressed by another health professional, the provider must refrain from recommending a specific service or equipment. Providers should use generic language when proposing recommendations to Veterans and their families.

For example, when a RN identifies that a Veteran has difficulty with chair transfers, it is expected that the RN recommends referral to OT services rather than a specific piece of equipment or treatment. This allows for the OT to explore possible options, following the hierarchy of intervention, and helps manage the expectations of Veterans and their families.

4. Clothing Allowance

The need for [Clothing Allowance](#) must be directly related to the service-related disability entitled condition for which the allowance is requested. If the RN/OT recommends a clothing allowance, the report should include:

- the description of the brace or the prosthetic appliance (make/model/serial number).
- the use of the device (purpose, location and how often it is being used).
- describe the wear and tear on the article(s) of clothing.

For any excessive soiling or staining of clothing, the report should include the degree of soiling and how often the article(s) must be washed and replaced (include cost estimate). In situations where specialty or custom-made apparel is being purchased, detailed information is required.

Up to four digital images can be uploaded on the Nursing and OT Assessment forms, via BSHOL. This is particularly important for Clothing Allowance as pictures of the brace/appliance and article(s) affected by the wear, tear or soiling help build credible evidence for decision making.

5. Mental Health Resource

To assist in identifying mental health services and supports, we encourage providers to become familiar with the [Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families](#). This library of resources is a wealth of information for Veterans,

families, and **service providers**. The Directory offers you meaningful, curated, and trustworthy information to support Veterans' health and well-being journey.

If you have any questions regarding the information provided, please contact your local Area Office Occupation Therapist or Field Services Nursing Officer at 1-866-522-2122.

Thank you for the ongoing care and service that you provide to our Veterans.