



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## IMPORTANT MILESTONE IN VETERANS' HEALTH CARE

The Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Mr Ian Campbell, said an important milestone in the development of a new program to improve health care for thousands of veterans and war widows was reached this week.

The Clinical Reference Group, which will provide the government with advice on the design and implementation of the *Preventable Admissions and Improved Community Care Program*, held its first meeting on Wednesday the 29<sup>th</sup> of September.

The reference group is made up of clinicians from across Australia with expertise in the management of chronic diseases, and includes a representative from the ex-service community.

The program aims to reduce the number of veterans and war widows being hospitalised by improving the community-based management of chronic diseases such as congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and diabetes.

The program was announced in the 2010-11 Federal Budget and will start operating in May 2011. Around 17,000 veterans and war widows are expected to benefit from the program by 2014.

Under the program, a doctor will prepare and regularly review a care plan for the participating veteran or war widow. The plan will be implemented by a nurse who will provide assistance such as coordinating appointments with health professionals and helping to manage medication.

Mr Campbell said the first meeting of the Clinical Reference Group is a major step in establishing the program. "The work of this important group will provide invaluable guidance to the Department of Veterans' Affairs in setting up the program and improving the management of chronic diseases in the veteran community. It will also act as a conduit to the medical and ex-service communities," he said.

One of the reference group members, Dr Steve Hambleton, Vice President of the Australian Medical Association (AMA), said that the AMA is very pleased to support the Department of Veterans' Affairs program.

"It's an innovative program that acknowledges the need for holistic and coordinated primary and community care. This model supports the role of the veteran's doctor and practice nurse in a team approach to improving health outcomes for Australia's veterans."

A list of the members of the reference group is attached. More information about the program can be found at

[http://www.dva.gov.au/health\\_and\\_wellbeing/health\\_programs/preventable/Pages/preventable\\_admission.aspx](http://www.dva.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/health_programs/preventable/Pages/preventable_admission.aspx)

**MEDIA INQUIRIES: DVA Media Team 02 6289 6203, [dvamedia@dva.gov.au](mailto:dvamedia@dva.gov.au)**

## Preventable Admissions and Improved Community Care Program Clinical Reference Group

Representative	Position	Organisation
Dr Graeme Killer AO (Chair)	Principal Medical Adviser	Department of Veterans' Affairs
Dr Steve Hambleton	Vice President	Australian Medical Association
Dr Rashmi Sharma	President, ACT Division	Australian General Practice Network
Ms Susan Halsey	Practice Nurse	Australian Practice Nurses Association
Dr Evan Ackermann	General Practitioner	Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
Ms Elizabeth Foley	Federal Professional Officer	Australian Nursing Federation
Dr Ken Mackey	Former President	Rural Doctors Association of Australia
Professor Mark Harris	Professor of General Practice and Executive Director of the Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity	University of NSW
Professor Louis Irving	Respiratory Physician, Royal Melbourne Hospital	Royal Australian College of Physicians
Dr Rod Bain	NSW RSL Vice President	Department of Veterans' Affairs Ex-service Organisation Round Table
Mr Ken Douglas	General Manager Services Division	Department of Veterans' Affairs
Ms Judy Daniel	National Manager Primary Care Policy Group	Department of Veterans' Affairs
Ms Letitia Hope	National Manager Primary Health Group	Department of Veterans' Affairs
Ms Gail Yapp	National Manager Community and Aged Care Policy Group	Department of Veterans' Affairs