



## Alternative Therapies and Gold and White Card holders

### Purpose

This Factsheet covers the current policy on alternative therapies under Gold and White Card arrangements, as well as outcomes of a recent review on the policy on alternative therapies.

### What are alternative therapies?

For DVA arrangements, alternative therapies include acupuncture and acupressure, aromatherapy, homeopathy, hypnotherapy and hypnosis, massage or therapeutic touch, meditation, music therapy, reflexology and relation therapy, reiki, tai chi and yoga.

### What is covered by Gold and White Card arrangements?

Gold and White Card holders can access funding for a wide range of medical and allied health services - such as physiotherapy, chiropractics, osteopathy, dietetics and podiatry. Of all alternative therapies, acupuncture and massage are most frequently asked about. These can be funded in the following circumstances:

- massage may be funded if it is delivered during a consultation with a physiotherapist, chiropractor or osteopath. The provider will use his or her clinical judgement to determine whether massage techniques, in conjunction with other treatments, are an appropriate form of treatment for the entitled person. The entitled person needs a referral from their Local Medical Officer (LMO) or General Practitioner (GP), and the health provider must be registered with Medicare Australia.
- acupuncture may be funded if provided by LMOs or GPs who are registered with Medicare Australia to provide this treatment.

Under Gold and White Card arrangements, entitled persons cannot access funding for services offered by any alternative therapy providers, such as masseurs, naturopaths or homeopaths.

### What were the outcomes of the review?

In 2010, the Department reviewed the policy related to alternative therapies for Gold and White Card holders.

As a significant purchaser of health care services, the Department is aware of the role of alternative therapies in Australian health care.

The review considered evidence for alternative therapies; the qualifications and regulation of alternative therapy providers; and how veteran agencies overseas deal with alternative therapies.

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There is emerging evidence (at different levels of quality and strength) about some therapies for some conditions.

However, there is often only limited information available on the evidence for the effects of an alternative therapy; the methodological quality of known reviews and trials tends to be low; and there is often not enough evidence to make recommendations about safety or efficacy of a particular therapy.

As a result of the review, the Department could not be confident that funding alternative therapies by alternative therapy providers under Gold and White Card arrangements would have significant benefits for patients, be cost-effective or be practical to implement at this time.

As a result of this review, this means that Gold and White Card arrangements will continue to not cover alternative therapies provided by alternative therapy providers.

A copy of the review report may be made available upon request.

### Other Factsheets

Other Factsheets related to this topic include:

- HSV01 Veteran - Overview of Health Services available to the Veteran Community
- HSV13 Chiropractic services – information for the veteran community
- HSV14 Osteopathic services – information for the veteran community
- HSV19 Physiotherapy services – information for the veteran community
- HSV20 Podiatry and medical grade footwear services
- HSV21 Dietetic services – information for the veteran community
- HSV60 Using the Repatriation Health Card — For All Conditions (Gold)
- HSV61 Repatriation Health Card - For Specific Conditions (White)

### Disclaimer

The information contained in this Factsheet is general in nature and does not take into account individual circumstances. You should not make important decisions, such as those that affect your financial or lifestyle position on the basis of information contained in this Factsheet. Where you are required to lodge a written claim for a benefit, you must take full responsibility for your decisions prior to the written claim being determined. You should seek confirmation in writing of any oral advice you receive from DVA relating to complex or important matters.

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### More information

All DVA Factsheets are available from DVA offices, and on the DVA website at:  
[www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)

DVA General Enquiries telephone number: 133 254 (metro)  
or FreeCall 1800 555 254 (regional callers).

Use a normal landline phone if you can. Mobile phone calls may cost you more.

You can send an email to DVA at: [GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au](mailto:GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au)