

Dear Minister,

The existing Home Medicines Review (HMR) process automatically triggers an over-servicing review when more than one HMR is ordered in a calendar year. It has come to our attention that many additional HMR are usually required as the result of a major medical event or a dramatic change in family circumstances.

Examples include a newly diagnosed ailment, surgery or hospital discharge or the death of a spouse, family member or carer. There are many possible events that would initiate the need for a significant change in a prescription regime.

An over-servicing review is initiated even when the medical practitioner has ordered the review for sound clinical reasons and with the approval of the relevant Department of Veterans Affairs officer. This could be a significant deterrent for the medical practitioner which may result in the doctor not taking action which is in the best interests of the patient.

Evidence from the Veterans' Medicines Advisory and Therapeutic Education Service (MATES) shows conclusively that HMRs are an effective tool in reducing hospitalisation through medicines misadventure and increasing awareness of good medicines' practice, thereby improving Veterans' health and reducing health care costs to Government.

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA) seeks a review and amendment of the process whereby ordering an additional HMR deemed necessary through a medical or life event does not automatically trigger an over servicing audit, provided DVA approval is sought, granted and registered with the authority that would normally order the audit.

This representation does not in any way condone over servicing by any medical practitioner.

I believe the Department of Health and Aging, under the guidance of your colleague The Hon Nicola Roxon, is the controlling authority for the over servicing audit process. The VVAA asks you to support this matter and to consult Minister Roxon to ensure when potential additional over servicing reviews are contemplated that the appropriate DVA staff are advised that a further HMR Audit will not be necessary, as appropriate.-

The members of the VVAA would be grateful for your consideration of this matter and we look forward to an early and favourable decision to further improve the management of veteran's medicines.

Yours Sincerely,