NATIONAL LABOUR-MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION COMMITTEE (NLMCC)

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC)
and
Union of Veterans Affairs' Employees (UVAE)

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 15, 2026 from 9:00 am to 10:30 am EST
Hybrid meeting – In person Ottawa / Virtual via Zoom

Chair: Toufic El Daher

Meeting attendees can be found in Annex A.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Items
1. Welcome, Roll Call and Approval of Agenda	Meeting Chair, UVAE National President (NP) Toufic El-Daher opened the meeting with a land acknowledgement. He welcomed everyone to the UVAE meeting and recognized that the ongoing open and constructive communication demonstrated commitment to working jointly for employees and ultimately our veteran clients and their family. A/Deputy Minister (DM) welcomed participants and recognized Zarina Khan, UVAE Regional Vice President, Ontario, for her leadership and dedication to advancing the Joint Learning Program (JLP) learning across VAC and the broader public service. She also highlighted the vital role management and bargaining agents play in advancing Veterans Affairs Canada's mandate, supporting both our clients and our employees.	
NEW ITEMS		
2. Questions Regarding Action Items	There were no questions regarding the action item updates.	
3. Partners in Canadian Veterans Rehabilitation Services (PCVRS)	UVAE stated that clients and case managers are frustrated with the lack of access to providers for clients which increases stress on our case managers. They also noted that PCVRS is paying providers less for their services than Medavie Blue Cross. UVAE stated that while they want the contract to succeed, it should not be at the expense of client service, employees, or public funds. UVAE shared two examples where case managers, who are the decision makers, disagreed with the rehab plan proposed by PCVRS and complaints were made against them and they feel their role is being diluted. UVAE believes that PCVRS is creating more work for case managers as PCVRS is getting more involved in work that is out of the scope of their role. UVAE is recommending that the contract be reviewed for cost savings and also to determine what work makes sense to give back to case managers. ADM Service Delivery (SD) noted that there has been progress made, with up to 15,000 providers and more clinics. While there still can be discrepancies between regions and client providers, VAC continues to constantly evaluate PCVRS to close any gaps. If any issues arise, Service Delivery will work to resolve them.	
4. Artificial Intelligence (AI) based Claim Summary Tool	UVAE raised concerns with the lack of notification regarding the implementation of the Centralized Operations Division AI Claim Summary tool. While they noted it is an excellent tool, they reminded the employer of their obligations in line with the collective agreement related to Technological Change. They also shared concerns about potential job loss and human decision-making being	UVAE RVP Atlantic to provide the A/DM with the two articles on Artificial

	replaced, associated with the implementation of this tool, however indicated that those concerns were eased by the presentation they received from COD management. UVAE asked if the data using the AI tool is protected and if there are plans to develop our own AI tools. A/DM stated the department is looking ahead to respond to the needs of our clients by leveraging technology for efficiency and not to take away high touch point needs for our clients. Resources could be redirected where there are gaps in service or new emerging client needs. ADM (SD) appreciates UVAE's positive feedback on the AI claim summary tool and will continue to ensure management obligations are met as it relates to the collective agreement and technological change. The AI claim summary tool is to assist employees who use it in decision making and will improve workload and reduce wait times. DG Information Technology, Information Management and Administration and Privacy (ITIMAP) noted that the tool is end to end encrypted and does not allow data to be stored. He also indicated that the government is currently looking into developing its own AI tools.	Intelligence that were referenced. Senior Director, Transformation to give presentation to the bargaining agents on digital service modernization at VAC.
5. Media Coverage	At UVAE's request, this item was moved to a future NLMCC meeting.	
6. Language training	UVAE raised that employees in unilingual positions in bilingual regions must be supported with equal and accessible French language training otherwise their career progression is negatively impacted.	DG HR will discuss language training at an upcoming HR / Bargaining Agent Heads meeting.
ROUND TABLE		
7. Round Table and Closing Remarks	UVAE stated that the changing world context will have a major health impact on all employees, including management, and would like to see VAC provide trauma-informed leadership training. UVAE NP thanked everyone for their participation in today's meeting and reminded everyone that January is Mental Health month, so we need to take care of ourselves. A/DM thanked everyone for their comments and acknowledged that VAC is thinking about the current geopolitical situation and any impacts it will have on our work in the future.	

VAC & VRAB Attendees Participants d'ACC & TACRA		Union Attendees Participants Agents négociateurs	
Deputy Minister's Office / Bureau du Sous-ministre	**Christine McDowell** A/ Deputy Minister (DM) / Sous-ministre (SM)p.i **April Stevens** Chief of Staff / Chef de cabinet	UVAE / SEAC	**Toufic El-Daher** National President / Président nationale EldaheT@uvae-seac.ca **Brandon Milford** National Executive Vice-President / Vice-président exécutif national milforb@uvae-seac.ca **Priscilla Giroux *for Jody LaPierre*** A/Regional Vice-President, Charlottetown Head Office / Vice-présidente régionale, Charlottetown p.i rvpheadoffice@uvae-seac.ca **Edwin MacDonald** Regional Vice-President, Atlantic Region / Vice-président régionale de l'Atlantique rvpatlantic@uvae-seac.ca **Simon Renaud** Regional Vice-President, Quebec Region / Vice-président régionale, région du Québec rvpquebec@uvae-seac.ca ***Gurinder Dev*** Regional Vice-President, Western Region / Vice-présidente régionale, région de l'Ouest rvpwestern@uvae-seac.ca presidentlocal20035@uvae-seac.ca **Lianne Bonneville** Observer / Observatrice bonnevl@uvae-seac.ca
Veterans Review and Appeals Board / Tribunal des anciens combattants (révision et appel)	**Kelsey MacDonald** Director General, Veterans Review and Appeal Board (DG VRAB) / Directrice générale par interim, Tribunal des anciens combattants (révision et appel) (DG TACRA)		
Bureau of Pensions Advocates / Bureau de services juridiques des pensions	**Lise Cormier *for Steven Woodman*** A/Executive Director and Chief Pensions Advocate, Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA) / Directrice exécutive et chef avocat-conseil des pensions p.i		
Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Services Branch / Dirigeante principale des finances et des services ministériels	**Pierre Tessier** A/Assistant Deputy Minister, Chief Financial Officer and Corporate Services (ADM CFOCS) / Sous-ministre adjoint, dirigeant principal des finances et des services ministériels (SMA, DPFSM) p.i **Chris Clissold** Director General, Information Technology and Information Management and Administration and Privacy (DG ITIMAP) / Directeur général, Technologie de l'information, Gestion de l'information, de l'administration et de la protection de la vie privée (DG, TIGIAPRP) **Nancy Pike** Director General, Human Resources (DG HR) / Directrice Générale, Ressources humaines (DG RH) **Trudy Burke** Senior Director, Workplace Relations / Directrice principale, Relations en milieu de travail **Suzanne Grundy** Director, Labour Relations / Directrice, Relations de travail **Cynthia MacAulay** Senior Corporate Labour Relations Advisor / Conseillère principale, Relations de travail ministérielles		
Service Delivery Branch / Prestation des services	**Steven Harris** Assistant Deputy Minister, Service Delivery (ADM SD) / Sous-ministre adjoint, Prestation des services (SMA, PS) **Cyd Courchesne** Director General, Health Professionals & Chief Medical Officer (DG HPCMO) / Directrice général, Profesionnels de la santé et médecin en chef		
Commemoration and Public Affairs Branch / Commémoration et des affaires publiques	**Trudie MacKinnon for Amy Meunier** Assistant Deputy Minister, Commemoration and Public Affairs (ADM CPA) / Sous-ministre adjointe intérimaire, Commémoration et des affaires publiques (SMA, CAP)		
Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Branch / Politiqies stratégiques, de la panification et du rendement	**Mitch Freeman** A/Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance (A/ADM SPPP) / Sous-ministre adjoint intérimaire, Politiqies stratégiques, de la panification et du rendement (SMA, PSPR)p.i		
Audit & Evaluation / Vérification et Évaluation	**Lindy McQuillan** Director General, Audit and Evaluation (DG AE) / Directrice générale intérimaire, Vérification et Évaluation (DG VE)		

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