

Anthony Saez  
Executive Director and Chief Pensions Advocate  
Bureau of Pensions Advocates  
PO Box 7700  
Charlottetown, PE  
C1A 8M9

November 18, 2024

Dear Mr. Saez,

The purpose of this letter is to provide constructive feedback from the client's perspective and offer a solution to improve the process for veterans with service-related cancers.

We are a small group of veterans who developed cancer as a result of our exposure to various cancer-causing chemicals while in service. Veterans with cancer are unique among veterans in that their injuries do not present themselves at the time of exposure but are delayed, sometimes by as much as 30 years, after the injury actually occurred. What we are hearing from veterans is that the requirement, stated in your form letters, for veterans' doctors to provide comment on the relationship between the cancer and their service is an impossible task in most cases. An example of our concern is shown below. However, we have seen other versions of this requirement which convey the same message.

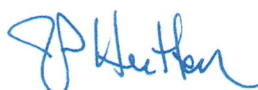
*"In order to support your claim, please ask your physician to provide a report which identifies your current diagnosis and provides an opinion whether your Prostate Cancer condition is more likely than not, caused or aggravated by your military service."*

This requirement suggests that the veterans claim may not be supported if the veteran fails to obtain a positive response. Although this may be appropriate for traditional injuries, when applied to veterans with cancer, it presents an impossible challenge, given that most doctors have limited knowledge of cancer research related to chemical exposure.

Discussions with VAC Director General, Trudie MacKinnon, revealed that veterans with cancer do not need to prove that their cancer was service related. Instead, they can take comfort in the presumptive conditions provided by paragraph 50(g) of the Veterans Well-Being Regulation.

Given this, I request that the paragraph highlighted above and similar paragraphs, not be used when responding to veterans with cancer.

Sincerely,



Commander (ret'd) James P. Hutton CD, BSc, MSc, MBA  
Director, Veterans with Cancer Inc.

cc. Guy Lachapelle, Veterans Excellence Team 1