



# ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT

November 2024

One of the biggest frustrations for veterans with cancer claims were the VAC and BPA requirements for veterans to get a letter from their doctor stating that their cancer was likely related to their service. For many this presented an insurmountable task which caused some to abandon their claim.

Last month we had a Teams Meeting with Trudie MacKinnon, Director General, Centralized Operations Division, Service Delivery at VAC. We discussed the requirement for doctor's letters, which we believed presented a systemic barrier to veterans with cancer claims. As a result, she made it clear that veterans with cancer claims do not need to show that their cancer was service-related. Instead, it was sufficient for these veterans to show their exposure to an environmental hazard while in service and rely on the presumptive conditions outlined in the Veterans Well-Being Regulation para 50(g).

Given that BPA was also including this requirement in their letters to veterans, we wrote to the Chief Pensions Advocate, Anthony Saez, requesting that paragraphs such as that shown here be removed from their form letters. ([see our letter here](#))

*"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 Cancer condition is more likely than not, caused or aggravated by your military service."*

As a result of our advocacy, we received a call yesterday from Zach at the Ottawa, BPA office informing me that they had just sent a broadcast out to all BPA offices informing them that such requirements are no longer appropriate for veterans with cancer claims. This is very good news for all current and future veterans with cancer. Unfortunately, the President and Founder of Veterans with Cancer Inc., Randy Hladun, was recently hospitalized due to complications with his cancer and wasn't able to post this himself. However, he asked me to pass on the following quote:

*"We have shown that a small group of determined veterans can influence process-change in large organizations like VAC and BPA through gentle persistence and anecdotal evidence of process-harm."* Randy Hladun, President and Founder VwC