



Anthony Saez

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Dear Mr. Saez,

I am writing on behalf of Veterans with Cancer Inc. to share our enclosed paper, *Doing More With Less: How Veterans Affairs Canada Can Exceed Service Standards Despite Budget Cuts*, and to invite your perspective on a key recommendation: the development of an **Early Dispute Resolution (EDR)** program.

The Bureau of Pensions Advocates occupies a uniquely important position within the veterans' benefits system. As the primary provider of free legal advice and representation to veterans before the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, the Bureau sees—case by case—where the system succeeds and where it breaks down. That operational insight makes the BPA an essential partner in any meaningful reform.

Current pressures on the system are well understood. Delays in disability benefit decisions persist, and recent reductions in BPA capacity will inevitably increase strain on both your advocates and the veterans who rely on them. In this context, incremental change is unlikely to be sufficient.

Our paper proposes EDR as a targeted, system-level response. By introducing facilitated resolution between initial decisions and formal appeals, EDR can resolve a significant proportion of disputes earlier, reducing the volume of cases requiring full adjudication. The evidence base—from comparable Canadian and international jurisdictions, as well as VAC's own early resolution efforts—suggests this approach can deliver faster outcomes while lowering overall system burden.

We see the BPA not simply as a stakeholder in this proposal, but as a potential co-designer.

An effective EDR model must be built with a clear understanding of where legal advocacy adds the greatest value, and where earlier intervention can resolve matters without compromising fairness. The Bureau's experience representing veterans across the full spectrum of claims uniquely positions it to help shape that balance—ensuring that EDR strengthens, rather than displaces, the right to representation.

Properly designed, EDR would allow BPA counsel to focus their efforts on the most complex and contested cases, while ensuring that more straightforward matters are resolved earlier and with less



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formality. It also presents an opportunity to embed safeguards—developed with your input—that ensure veterans’ rights are protected at every stage of the process.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage with you and your team on how such a model could be developed within the existing framework. Your perspective would be invaluable in ensuring that any EDR initiative is both operationally sound and aligned with the Bureau’s mandate.

Veterans depend on the BPA as both advocate and safeguard within the system. We believe this proposal offers an opportunity to reinforce that role—by improving access to timely resolution while preserving the full strength of legal representation where it is most needed.

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Enclosures (2):

1. *Doing More with Less: How Veterans Affairs Canada Can Exceed Service Standards Despite Budget Cuts (Policy Paper)*
2. *Doing More with Less: Executive Summary*