



Toufic El-Daher

National President

Union of Veterans' Affairs Employees

233 Gilmour Street, Suite 703

Ottawa (Ontario) K2P 0P2

March 23, 2025

Dear Mr. El-Daher,

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 seek the support of the Union of Veterans' Affairs Employees for a key recommendation: the introduction of an **Early Dispute Resolution (EDR)** program.

We have followed your advocacy regarding recent budget reductions and their impact on both service delivery and the employees who sustain it. Your position—that cuts of this magnitude inevitably affect veterans' access to timely and fair decisions—aligns closely with the concerns raised in our paper.

Our proposal is intended as a practical response to those pressures. An EDR program would introduce a structured, facilitated step between initial VAC decisions and formal appeals, allowing a significant portion of disputes to be resolved earlier. Evidence from comparable jurisdictions shows that such models reduce delays, improve outcomes, and ease downstream workload pressures on adjudicative bodies.

We believe this initiative also presents a meaningful opportunity for the workforce you represent.

The establishment of an EDR function would require the creation of a dedicated group of trained facilitators within the system. This would expand union-represented roles while creating new career pathways for existing employees—particularly those with experience in case management, adjudication support, and client service. At the same time, the EDR process would require more active engagement from VAC staff earlier in the lifecycle of a claim, reinforcing the need for adequate staffing levels and supporting the case for targeted workforce growth.

In this respect, EDR is not a substitute for capacity—it is a way to deploy it more effectively. It aligns with the union's longstanding position that improving outcomes for veterans requires both better processes and sufficient, well-supported personnel to deliver them.

We see the Union not simply as a stakeholder, but as an important voice in shaping how such a program could be implemented in a way that supports both employees and the veterans they serve.



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Your perspective on workforce design, training, and operational realities would be invaluable in ensuring that an EDR model is both effective and sustainable.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this proposal and explore how it could advance our shared objective: a system that works better for veterans because it is properly supported by the people within it.

Veterans deserve timely, fair decisions. The employees you represent deserve the tools, structure, and capacity to deliver them. We believe this proposal advances both.

Respectfully,

Commander (ret'd) James P. Hutton, rmc, CD, BSc, MSc, MBA
Director, Veterans with Cancer Inc.
cell: (519) 374-4081

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*