



Client Relatives (Veterans Independence Program)

Effective Date: January 1, 2013

Purpose

This policy provides direction on the requirement to consider the involvement of relatives living with the client when determining the client's need for services covered under the Veterans Independence Program (VIP) including: health and support, personal care, housekeeping, grounds maintenance, access to nutrition, and transportation (including the transportation of clients for Ambulatory Health Care).

This policy does not apply to relatives living outside the client's home, as they should be regarded like any other service provider in the community.

Policy

Intent

1. The VIP services are not intended to replace those provided by relatives living with the client. However, VIP services should be approved if evidence suggests that an eligible client's assessed needs will not be met, although a relative may reside with the client. For example, an eligible client may have a son or daughter living with him who, for whatever reason, is unable to assist the client with housekeeping, grounds maintenance, etc. In a case such as this, if access to the VIP is not authorized based on the fact that a relative is living with the client, then this client, with an assessed need, would go without services to which they are eligible.
2. This policy must be applied in accordance with the general principles of the VIP. The VIP shall only be provided for as long as the client needs the services, and where these services are not already available through other sources (e.g. another provincial or municipal program).

Definitions

3. For the purposes of this policy:
 - a. **relative** means anyone connected to the client by blood or by law and who lives with the client;
 - b. **capable** means willing and able. Capability refers to the overall wellness, ability and willingness of the relative, as well as other factors such as maturity and availability that may affect the relative's readiness to perform the VIP services.

General

4. The client's household circumstances should be evaluated, taking into account all factors that may impact both the client and the capability of any relatives living with the client.

Capability of Relatives

5. In determining the overall circumstances of the household and the capability of relatives, an individualized approach is required. Capability is not just physical ability, it must also include overall wellness, ability, and willingness.
6. Sensitivity is important and should be taken into consideration when assessing the overall well-being of relatives and their capability to provide support to a client. For example, a younger client returning from overseas duty may have an impact on a relative's physical and psychological state, or relatives of an older client may already have taken on extra work to meet the client's need. A relative who is physically able may not be emotionally or mentally able. While some relatives of a younger client may be physically able, they may not be available due to working full time, caring for children and dealing



with other pressures that may seriously impact their capabilities to meet certain needs of the client.

7. When assessing the capability of a relative, circumstances may suggest that the client's relative is not willing and able to support the client. In such cases, unless VIP services are approved, the client may go without the necessary services. If the client meets the required eligibility criteria for the VIP services, then the services should be approved and provided by someone other than the relative.

Exceptional Circumstances

8. A relative will not usually be paid for providing VIP services. The only exception is when it is clear that a relative has had to make changes to their employment status (e.g. a change from a full-time to a part-time job or has had to terminate employment), and has suffered a loss or reduction of wages as a result of providing the VIP services for the eligible client. In these cases, a financial contribution towards the cost of certain VIP services may be considered if:
 - a. the relative demonstrates the exceptional nature of the arrangement and provides proof of the employment change and loss or reduction of wages as a result of providing for the needs of the client;
 - b. the relative is fully skilled in performing the services for which they are being paid (e.g. if the relative is performing health and support services, they must be an approved [health professional](#));
 - c. the relative is providing services that would be performed during the relative's normal working hours such as personal care (services such as cleaning, ground maintenance will not be considered);
 - d. the relative is only being reimbursed as the service provider and not for lost wages;
 - e. the cost of the services is comparable to the standard rate for similar services in the area, and
 - f. the relative is fully aware that receiving a wage for the services will prevent them from subsequently being eligible for the applicable VIP services as a [primary caregiver](#).

References

Veterans Health Care Regulations,