

Cannabis for Medical Purposes Le cannabis à des fins médicales

Issue

- Veterans Affairs Canada reimburses eligible Veterans for the purchase of cannabis for medical purposes at a maximum rate of \$8.50 per gram for up to three grams per day. In exceptional cases, with appropriate supporting medical documents, more than three grams per day may be reimbursed.

Background

- Veterans Affairs began reimbursing for cannabis for medical purposes in 2007.
- As legislation and regulations governing cannabis have been introduced in recent years, Canadians have gained more access to cannabis for medical use.
- Veterans Affairs introduced its reimbursement policy in November 2016, initially reimbursing for dried cannabis, or its equivalent in fresh cannabis or cannabis oil.
- With the revised Health Canada *Cannabis Regulations*, effective October 17, 2019, Veterans Affairs updated its policy to reimburse eligible Veterans for the purchase of edible cannabis, cannabis extracts and cannabis topicals.

Considerations

- Cannabis is an evolving area of treatment and is authorized for a variety of medical conditions. However, scientific evidence substantiating the efficacy and safety of cannabis for medical treatment is lacking.

Current Status /Next Steps

- In 2018-2019, the Department reimbursed approximately 10,500 Veterans at a cost of approximately \$75 million. Reimbursement requests continue to grow, year over year.
- The Department reviews and analyzes information to ensure decisions are based on the best available evidence, and will adjust the policy as needed.

Recommended Holding Line - Advice to Minister

- Veterans Affairs Canada reimburses eligible Veterans for the purchase of cannabis for medical purposes at a maximum rate of \$8.50 per gram for up to

three grams per day – in some cases, this is over \$9,000 per year to support this treatment. In exceptional cases, with appropriate supporting medical documents, more than three grams per day may be reimbursed.