



Public Service Alliance of Canada
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada



Uncover the Costs

MESSAGE FROM NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Thank you for your on-going support!!
Keep up the good work. We are having an impact.

Instead of dealing with our powerful messages and stories directly, the Minister and VAC officials are hiding out. Refusing to even comment in the media. What are they afraid of?

Our Veterans Deserve Better. Stop Contracting Out.

**-Virginia Vaillancourt
National President**



Virginia Vaillancourt is the national president of the Union of Veterans' Affairs Employees.

IN THE MEDIA

CBC PEI AUDIO LINK (ENGLISH ONLY)

Our campaign was recently spotlighted on PEI's "Island Morning." Check it out at the following link:

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-30-island-morning/clip/15923609-ad-campaign-launched-outsourced-rehabilitation-services-veterans>

Ad campaign lauched against outsourced rehabilitation services for veterans

Play Segment 7:06 Share Segment

Instead of contracting out rehabilitation services to a third party Virginia Vaillancourt, National President of the Union for Veterans Affairs Employees says that more case managers are needed.

Aired: July 7, 2022

LETTER TO THE DEPUTY MINISTER

Deputy Minister Ledwell,

I **urge you** to please rethink this program, the changes that are coming down the line, the process and efforts being taken to supposedly reduce the stress level, stabilizing extreme high workloads, and the negative impact on mental health of not only Case Managers but all frontline staff, are falling short!!!

Despite all of the adverse effects noted above, I continue to show up and help my client because I CARE, I HAVE COMPASSION, I HAVE HIGH RESPECT for my veterans!!! How much of that does the department have all of that FOR ME!??? I/We (CMs) DESERVE THE SAME! Let's be realistic!! RSVP will NOT make life easier for CMs and MUCH LESS for the veterans.

PLEASE PAY ATTENTION!!!

G. Lissette Serrano

POLITICAL UPDATE

Nothing in response from the minister.

CASE MANAGER'S STORIES: LETTER TO ANONYMOUS

We recently received a letter in our office. It is from an anonymous Case Manager. We can't respond personally so here is our public response:

Dear Anonymous,

We want you to know that we hear you. We know that you are overworked and feel burdened by the many pressures that the Department and your work as a Case Manager have brought on in recent years. We know that you just want a break and really want this new Rehab contract to bring it to you and your colleagues. After all, that's the promise that VAC is making to you, isn't it?

We wish that it was true. All those promises that VAC has been making to Case Managers, we just don't believe it. Why? Let's look at the facts.

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First of all, this is not the first, second, third or tenth promise that VAC has made to Case Managers to improve their lives and working conditions. For about 10 years they have been promising to reduce case loads and get it back to the goal of 25:1. You might notice they no longer promise that. How many cases are you managing? 30, 35, 40? Some Case Managers are trying to juggle in excess of 50 cases.

The response from VAC... 'Well, they must be able to handle it' or 'They'll let us know when it's too much' Really???

We have nothing against the new Rehab contractor. They are simply doing the government's bidding and filling the space that VAC chooses not to fill with employees. Our issue is with the Department who had a choice of hiring more Case Managers and decided to contract out the work. The new Rehab contract just

continues a long pattern of reducing and diminishing the role and responsibilities of Case Managers and transferring them to a profit-making organization. It is a fundamental question of whether or not public services should be provided by a private for-profit contractor, or public service employees focusing on the quality of the service and not the quantity.

The big question that we would like you to consider in all of this is actually only partially about you and your fellow Case Managers. Yes, the Union is trying to protect jobs, including yours. But do you really believe that after your job gets hollowed out again after this contract that VAC will need your services as a Case Manager? When your job description gets drastically changed and a significant portion of your delegated authority is removed, do you think that will not have an impact upon your job classification and rate of pay? The really big question is whether or not this contract will be better for the Veterans that you serve?

Will they be better off with you having less of a role in managing their files? Will the contractor worry about them and their family after they go home at night? Like you do? Will they get all the services and help they need, or will they have to fight again for those services? Without you there beside them to represent them, to argue for them, to fight for them, what happens to the most vulnerable who cannot do any of that for themselves? Who will fight for the Veterans when the contractor turns them down for something they really need?

This fight is about Case Managers and Veterans. To preserve what is left of that crucial relationship. This is not just a fight 'in principle'. It is about our principles and fighting for what is the best thing for ourselves and the Veterans we have the honour to serve.

**In Solidarity,
Virginia Vaillancourt
National President – UVAE**

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www.uncoverthecost.ca

MESSAGE FROM ANONYMOUS:

Hello, I just read the 14 weeks of hell post talking about CM workload and the rehab changes that are coming.

I agree CMs are overworked and don't have time to get all their work done. This has been a struggle for years!

However I don't agree with the tone used about the new rehab contractor. It is really not on par with how I feel and many other of my peers. I think that contracting out rehab logistics will take away so much administrative burden the CMs have and allows CMs to concentrate on managing Veteran needs. Finding and running after providers is so much work and takes a lot of time.

I get that why UVAE would be opposed to contacting out work in principle. Though in this case I feel it is to our benefit. We contract out the professional part and it makes sense to me to also do it with the psychological and physical rehab too. Case management is the role not rehab logistics.

I am submitting my comments anonymously as in the past when I made a comment that was not in line with UVAE I got a very negative response. It made me feel that it was "siding with the employer" because I didn't fully agree one thing. I don't feel comfortable expressing my feelings at meetings if they are not touting the union line. I believe in unity but I don't always agree 100% with the union. I do not feel comfortable expressing my feeling on the 10% of stuff I am not in agreement with and don't feel I have a way to Express that on any level with UVAE.

I truly believe that the upcoming rehab changes will benefit CMs and the Veterans and so do others. I hope you can look at this with an objective lense.

Regards,
An Anonymous Brother

UVAE RESPONSE TO VAC PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Veterans Affairs says: "One national contract for all vital services "will cut the administrative burden on case managers, allowing them to spend more time with their veteran clients and less time on the paperwork."

UVAE response: They are removing the core of CM duties that gives them meaningful contact with their Veterans and maintaining the case loads at 30-40, even 50 cases. So, no less paperwork and a hollowed-out job as a Case Manager. They will become admin service providers to the contractor.

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Veterans Affairs says: "The government's new contract will improve the delivery of rehabilitation services for veterans and will mean fewer steps for veterans and the case managers that serve them, allowing for more time to focus on the rehabilitation itself."

UVAE response: What we see are major changes, a major learning curve, new technologies, different parties involved looking to achieve different goals that will lead to duplication of work and more challenges for Veterans to overcome.

Veterans Affairs says: "There will be no impact on jobs as a result of the contract."

UVAE response: There will be a direct impact on the job of every Case Manager and every VSA and other staff who support them. This is a definite downgrade in terms of responsibilities and once that it is reflected in the new classification structure, there will be pressure to red-circle existing jobs and lower the classification for new hires.

Veterans Affairs says: "The contract in question will also not impact the department's plan to address disability benefit wait times, as "the two items are unrelated, and the government has used external service providers since 2006 to support veterans' rehabilitation."

UVAE response: Yes, the government has used external service providers to support veterans' rehabilitation but under the previous contract it was the Case Managers who was the driver of veterans needs\file. Now the Case Manager will be providing support to the contractor who's first objective is being profitable and second how to meet mandate requirement. The Veteran) is far from being the number 1 priority in this scenario.

Veterans Affairs says: "The procurement process began in June 2019, and included consultations with veterans, their families, and departmental employees, who had the opportunity to provide feedback and influence each step of the process."

UVAE response: The contract was tendered and awarded before the Union and the vast majority of Case Managers knew what was happening. Focus groups with select Case Managers were established after the fact to get input and the union appointees to working groups were ignored and not invited to many meetings. The department has never provided any answers about how this new system will work despite many, many questions by Case Managers. This is not consultation.

Veterans Affairs says: When asked whether the government plans to hire more full-time case managers within the federal government rather than on temporary contracts VAC says "we always ensure that we are hiring full-time and temporary case managers to maintain our capacity, and provide veterans with case management support."

UVAE response: We are still waiting for the promised relief to come. There are vacancies in Case Management positions in every region of the country. It is not getting better. It is getting worse.

Veterans Affairs says: "We have improved our staffing and onboarding processes to accelerate and facilitate the recruitment of case managers."

UVAE response: See answer above. If the end result is the same, then how can you say that your staffing and onboarding processes have improved?

Veterans Affairs says: In response to questions around wait times, a VAC spokesperson said "the government welcomes the AG's report and its recommendations, is making progress in reducing wait times, and has reduced the backlog by more than 30 per cent since September 2021."

UVAE response: Did they read the Auditor General's Report? The AG said that the problem wasn't getting any better and that they had no staffing plan to deal with the backlog. They can play games with statistics, but on the ground the system is backlogged and Veterans continue to wait for the services they need.

Veterans Affairs says: "We are committed to working with central agencies to explore options for long-term resources to help us make more timely decisions and permanently solve this issue."

UVAE response: They have no plan and nothing they have tried has worked. They are still trying to make a temporary fix to a long-term problem. The solution is to ask Case Managers and other staff for their suggestions and to have enough staff on duty to actually serve the existing needs of Veterans and their families.