

MINISTER FOR VETERANS

Veterans' Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment Regulations 2025

August 2025

This paper seeks authorisation to submit the Veterans' Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment Regulations 2025 (the Regulations) to the Executive Council.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- July 2025 Cabinet Legislation Committee Minute of Decision: *Veterans' Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment Regulations 2025* [LEG-25-MIN-0151];
- The associated Cabinet Paper: *Veterans' Support Regulations: Updates to the List of Treatment Providers*; and
- Veterans' Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment Regulations 2025 Order in Council.

This pack has been released on the New Zealand Defence Force website, available at:

www.nzdf.mil.nz/nzdf/search-our-libraries/documents/?document-type=Official+information&sort=relevance.

No information has been withheld.



Cabinet Legislation Committee

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Veterans' Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment Regulations 2025

Portfolio Veterans

On 31 July 2025, the Cabinet Legislation Committee:

- 1 **noted** that in May 2025, the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee agreed to changes to Part 1 of the Veterans' Support Regulations 2014 concerning Treatment Providers, to:
 - 1.1 update the regulations for acupuncturists and audiologists;
 - 1.2 add regulations for audiometrists, Chinese medicine practitioners, and paramedics;
 - 1.3 add an umbrella provision for health practitioners who treat eligible veterans residing overseas;

[ECO-25-MIN-0058]
- 2 **noted** that the above changes have received favourable feedback from the relevant professional organisations;
- 3 **agreed** that the proposed umbrella provision referred to in paragraph 1.3 above would more appropriately be covered in the primary legislation (the Veterans' Support Act 2014) and should instead be included in a future Veterans' Support Amendment Bill;
- 4 **noted** that the changes are expected to have an immaterial cost to Veterans' Affairs and are unlikely to have a budgetary impact on Vote Defence Force;
- 5 **authorised** the submission to the Executive Council of the Veterans' Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment Regulations 2025 [PCO 27661/5.0];
- 6 **noted** that the Veterans' Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment Regulations 2025 will come into force on 4 September 2025.

Tom Kelly
Committee Secretary

Attendance: (See over)

Present:

Hon David Seymour
Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon Chris Bishop (Chair)
Hon Paul Goldsmith
Hon Louise Upston
Hon Brooke van Velden
Hon Tama Potaka
Hon Simon Watts
Hon Nicole McKee
Hon Chris Penk
Stuart Smith, MP
Todd Stephenson, MP
Jamie Arbuckle, MP

Officials present from:

Officials Committee for LEG
Office of the Leader of the House

Proactively Released by the Minister for Veterans

Veterans' Support Regulations: Updates to the List of Treatment Providers

Proposal

1. This paper seeks authorisation for submission to the Executive Council of the Veterans' Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment Regulations 2025. If approved the Order will give effect to amendments to the list of treatment providers in Part 1 of the Regulations to allow three other types of medical professionals to be added to the occupational groups to be treatment providers and to update details of two other occupational groups.

Relation to Government Priorities

2. The proposals in this paper are related to the broad Government priority of improving healthcare. The proposals are expected to improve access to treatment for Veterans' Affairs claimants and ease pressures on some medical practices.

Executive Summary

3. Currently Part 1 of the Veterans' Support Regulations 2014 (the Regulations) lists *acupuncturists*, *audiologists*, *counsellors* and *speech therapists* who can provide Veterans' Affairs funded treatment to eligible veterans additional to those treatment providers listed in the Veterans' Support Act section 7 "treatment provider" definition. These additional providers, and the specified criteria they must meet, are set out in the Regulations and are aligned with definitions and criteria in Accident Compensation legislation.
4. The Amendment Regulations and commencement order, if approved, will add three new treatment providers to the list of treatment providers (*audiometrists*, *Chinese medicine practitioners* and *paramedics*), setting out the specific criteria they must meet; amend the regulation for *acupuncturists* to recognise the Chinese Medicine Council as the new regulatory body with whom they must be registered; and amend the regulation for *audiologists* as treatment providers who meet updated New Zealand Audiological Society criteria.
5. The intention, as approved by the Cabinet Economic Committee and Cabinet [ECO-25-MIN-58, CAB-25-MIN-0151] was also to add a new umbrella provision to confer a power for Veterans' Affairs to fund or contribute to the costs of treatment provided by treatment providers equivalent to those in New Zealand for veterans residing overseas, in line with the Veterans' Support Act 2014. It

has since been determined that it would be more appropriate to include that clarification in the primary legislation.

Policy

6. In deciding whether to fund an eligible veteran's treatment, Veterans' Affairs must consider, among other things, whether the treatment provider is sufficiently qualified and experienced to provide the treatment required.
7. The definition of "treatment provider" in section 7 of the Veterans' Support Act 2014 lists treatment providers drawn from the Accident Compensation legislation, and provides that additions to that list can be made under the Veterans' Support Regulations 2014, including (but not limited to) whether and, if so, the extent members of any occupational group are recognised by the Accident Compensation Act 2001.
8. Currently the Veterans' Support Regulations list *acupuncturists*, *audiologists*, *counsellors* and *speech therapists* as occupational groups to be treatment providers additional to those listed in the Veterans' Support Act section 7 "treatment provider" definition and sets out the specific criteria these providers must meet.
9. The Accident Compensation (Definitions) Regulations 2019 (ACC Definitions Regulations) have recently been amended to add three new treatment providers (*audiometrist*, *Chinese medicine practitioner*, and *paramedic*) and the specified criteria they must meet; to update the specified criteria for members of two groups of treatment providers (*acupuncturist* and *audiologist*); and to amend the scope of practice for a *nurse*.
10. The Veterans' Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment Regulations Order, if approved, will mirror these changes, but it is not proposed to add a regulation for *nurse* as *nurse* is already listed in Section 7 of the Act under the definition of treatment providers.
11. The proposed additions and changes to the Veterans' Support Regulations will align with most of the recent changes made by ACC in the Accident Compensation (Definitions) Regulations 2019. The proposed changes will:
 - 11.1 amend the regulation for *acupuncturists* to recognise the Chinese Medical Council as the new regulatory body to ensure Veterans' Affairs funding continues;
 - 11.2 amend the regulation for *audiologists* to align with the revised New Zealand Audiologist Society definition;

- 11.3 add a regulation for *audiometrists* as treatment providers to enable Veterans' Affairs to fund treatment provided by them;
- 11.4 add a regulation for *Chinese medicine practitioners* as treatment providers who are registered health practitioners under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003; and
- 11.5 add a regulation for *paramedics* as treatment providers to ensure Veterans' Affairs can fund treatment provided by them.
12. On 7 May 2025, Cabinet agreed to these proposed changes [ECO-25-MIN-0058, CAB-25-MIN-0151 refer].
13. The changes will provide more accurate information about the treatment providers who may treat eligible veterans and consistency with the health sector.
14. Cabinet also approved the addition of an umbrella regulation which would confer a power for Veterans' Affairs to fund or contribute to the costs of treatment provided by treatment providers in New Zealand, or by an equivalent overseas treatment provider if a veteran resides overseas. This regulation would act as a point of clarification on what is already current practise in relation to treatment of eligible New Zealand veterans under the Act. It has since been determined that it would be more appropriate to include that clarification in the primary legislation and I propose that the clarification be made in the context of a future amendment of Veterans' Support Amendment Bill.

Timing and 28-Day Rule

15. The Order and regulations will comply with the 28-day rule and will come into force on 4 September 2025.

Compliance

16. The proposed regulations comply with each of the following:
- 16.1 the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi;
- 16.2 the rights and freedoms contained in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 or the Human Rights Act 1993;
- 16.3 the principles and guidelines set out in the Privacy Act 2020;
- 16.4 the relevant international standards and obligations; and

- 16.5 the Legislation Design and Advisory Committee Guidelines (2021) which are maintained by the Legislation Design and Advisory Committee.

Regulations Review Committee

17. There are no anticipated grounds for the Regulations Review Committee to draw these regulations amendments to the attention of the House under Standing Order 327.

Certification by Parliamentary Counsel Office

18. The Amendment Regulations have been certified by the Parliamentary Counsel Office as being in order for submission to Cabinet.

Cost-of-Living Implications

19. The proposals are expected to have a neutral impact on the cost of living with the proposals neither likely to raise or lower the cost of treatment for Veterans' Affairs claimants.

Financial Implications

20. The proposed amendments to the Veterans' Support Regulations will have no adverse effect on veterans' entitlements, and are unlikely to have budgetary impact on Vote Defence Force. The changes are expected to improve access to treatment in some areas by increasing the range of treatment providers able to provide Veterans' Affairs funded treatment. This may result in Veterans' Affairs eligible clients receiving their treatment more rapidly. However, it is unlikely to be a factor in any increase in the number of clients eligible for and receiving Veterans' Affairs funded treatment.
21. Approximately 6,250 veterans are receiving impairment compensation based on having an accepted service-related condition. The number of veterans who would access treatment by the proposed additional treatment providers would be smaller subsets of this overall 6,250 figure, depending on the illness/injury in question.

Impact Analysis

Regulatory Impact Statement

22. The Ministry for Regulation has determined that this proposal is exempt from the requirement to provide a Regulatory Impact Statement on the grounds that it has no or only minor impacts on businesses, individuals, and not-for-profit entities.

Climate Implications of Policy Assessment

23. The Climate Implications of Policy Assessment (CIPA) has been consulted and confirms that the CIPA requirements do not apply to this proposal as the threshold for significance is not met.

Population Implications

24. The changes may have a positive impact on veterans seeking treatment for their service-related injuries or illness by facilitating access to a wider range of treatment providers.

Consultation

Agency Consultation

25. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) was consulted in the development of this paper.

Public Consultation

26. MBIE conducted public consultation on ACC's behalf on their proposed changes from 18 April to 16 May 2004. Around 200 submissions were received from a range of people associated with the health occupations affected by their proposed changes. Most submissions were in favour.
27. Since the proposed changes to the Veterans' Support Regulations substantively duplicate those made in the ACC Definitions Regulations, I conducted a limited consultation in January 2025 by writing letters to the relevant professional associations. I received favourable responses to the proposed changes from the Chinese Medical Council of New Zealand, Acupuncture NZ, the New Zealand Audiological Society, the New Zealand Hearing Industry Association, and the Paramedic Council.

Communications

28. The proposed changes will be announced on the Veterans' Affairs website, and communicated separately to veterans' groups.

Proactive Release

29. Veterans' Affairs will proactively release this Cabinet paper and accompanying Cabinet Minute.

Recommendations

30. I recommend that the Cabinet Legislation Committee:

1. **note** that on 7 May 2025 the Economic Committee agreed [ECO- MIN-0058] that Part 1 of the Veterans' Support Regulations 2014 concerning Treatment Providers should be amended to update the regulations for *acupuncturists* and *audiologists*, add regulations for *audiometrist*, *Chinese medicine practitioners*, and *paramedics*, and add an umbrella provision for health practitioners who treat eligible veterans residing overseas;
2. **note** that the above changes have received favourable feedback from the relevant professional organisations;
3. **agree** that the proposed umbrella provision referred to in recommendation 1 above would more appropriately be covered in the primary legislation (the Veterans' Support Act 2014) and should instead be included in a future Veterans' Support Amendment Bill;
4. **note** that the changes are expected to have an immaterial cost to Veterans' Affairs and are unlikely to have a budgetary impact on Vote Defence Force;
5. **agree** that the Veterans' Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment Regulations 2025 will come into force on 4 September 2025, thus complying with the 28-day rule; and
6. **authorise** the submission to the Executive Council of the Veterans' Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment Regulations 2025.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Chris Penk
Minister for Veterans

**Veterans’ Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment
Regulations 2025**

Order in Council

At Wellington this day of 2025

Present:
in Council

These regulations are made under section 265 of the Veterans’ Support Act 2014 on the advice and with the consent of the Executive Council.

Contents

		Page
1	Title	2
2	Commencement	2
3	Principal regulations	2
4	Regulation 5 replaced (Acupuncturists)	2
5	Acupuncturists	2
5	Regulation 6 amended (Audiologists)	2
6	New regulations 6A and 6B inserted	2
	6A Audiometrists	2
	6B Chinese medicine practitioners	3
7	New regulation 7A inserted (Paramedics)	3
	7A Paramedics	3

Regulations

1 Title

These regulations are the Veterans' Support (Treatment Providers) Amendment Regulations 2025.

2 Commencement

These regulations come into force on 4 September 2025.

3 Principal regulations

These regulations amend the Veterans' Support Regulations 2014.

4 Regulation 5 replaced (Acupuncturists)

Replace regulation 5 with:

5 Acupuncturists

A person who is an acupuncturist is a treatment provider if the person—

- (a) is registered as a practitioner of acupuncture with the Chinese Medicine Council of New Zealand, established by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (Designation of Chinese Medicine Services as Health Profession) Order 2021; and
- (b) holds a current practising certificate.

5 Regulation 6 amended (Audiologists)

- (1) In regulation 6(a), after “is a”, insert “full audiologist”.
- (2) After regulation 6(a), insert:
 - (aa) holds a current practising certificate; and
- (3) In regulation 6(b)(i), delete “his or her”.

6 New regulations 6A and 6B inserted

After regulation 6, insert:

6A Audiometrists

A person who is an audiometrist is a treatment provider if the person—

- (a) is a full audiometrist member of the New Zealand Audiological Society Incorporated; and
- (b) holds a current practising certificate; and
- (c) when acting as an audiometrist, is not acting—
 - (i) in the course of employment by a supplier of hearing aids; or
 - (ii) as a supplier of hearing aids.

6B Chinese medicine practitioners

A person who is a Chinese medicine practitioner is a treatment provider if the person—

- (a) is registered as a practitioner of Chinese medicine services with the Chinese Medicine Council of New Zealand, established by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (Designation of Chinese Medicine Services as Health Profession) Order 2021; and
- (b) holds a current practising certificate.

7 New regulation 7A inserted (Paramedics)

After regulation 7, insert:

7A Paramedics

A person who is a paramedic is a treatment provider if the person—

- (a) is registered as a paramedic with the Paramedic Council, established by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (Designation of Paramedic Services as Health Profession) Order 2019; and
- (b) holds a current practising certificate.

Clerk of the Executive Council.

Explanatory note

This note is not part of the regulations but is intended to indicate their general effect.

These regulations, which come into force on 4 September 2025, amend the Veterans' Support Regulations 2014 (the **principal regulations**).

Regulations 4 and 5 of these regulations amend the specified criteria in the principal regulations for a person who is an acupuncturist or a person who is an audiologist to be a treatment provider under the Veterans' Support Act 2014 (the **Act**).

Regulations 6 and 7 of these regulations add new categories of persons to be treatment providers and the specified criteria for those persons to be treatment providers under the Act, as follows:

- *new regulation 6A* provides specified criteria for a person who is an audiometrist. The person must be a full audiometrist member of the New Zealand Audiological Society Incorporated and hold a current practising certificate. When acting as an audiologist, the person must not be acting in the course of employment by a supplier of hearing aids or as a supplier of hearing aids:
- *new regulation 6B* provides specified criteria for a person who is a Chinese medicine practitioner. The person must be registered as a practitioner of Chinese medicine services with the Chinese Medicine Council of New Zealand,

established by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (Designation of Chinese Medicine Services as Health Profession) Order 2021, and hold a current practising certificate:

- *new regulation 7A* provides specified criteria for a person who is a paramedic. The person must be registered as a paramedic with the Paramedic Council, established by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (Designation of Paramedic Services as Health Profession) Order 2019, and hold a current practising certificate.

Issued under the authority of the Legislation Act 2019.

Date of notification in *Gazette*:

These regulations are administered by the New Zealand Defence Force.