

# Foreword

## A Message from Veterans Affairs Canada



Congratulations to the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists for producing this Guidance Document on working with the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada. If the key to positive outcomes is client-centred care then

understanding your client population is crucial to success. Having read this document, I believe its audience will find it most useful in understanding the unique needs of the military and Veteran populations.

Occupational therapy has a long and rich history of working with military personnel and Veterans and it is heartwarming to note that there is a will for this engagement to continue. Military personnel face many transition stages throughout their career and lifetime. From a state of health to one of dealing with illness or injury (transitional or permanent), from wearing the uniform to transitioning to civilian life, from one employment to another or to retirement, all these stages present challenges. The mandate of Veterans Affairs Canada is to support and assist Veterans in transitioning seamlessly through these

transitional stages. I consider occupational therapists to play a key role in assisting military and Veterans in these important transition steps whether it is assisting with physical or mental health needs. Occupational therapists are de facto transition specialists.

In the same manner that occupational therapists take a holistic approach to care, this Guidance Document provides a complete picture of Veterans' health issues. It is important to understand that Veterans are a product of the military therefore the section on the Canadian Armed Forces is crucial. And whatever impacts a military member or a Veteran also affects their family members, so the section on working with military families is also of utmost importance.

Veterans Affairs Canada has employed occupational therapists for several decades and their value to the care management team and to the clients they serve is without question. This document will be of great value to those who choose to help those who served valiantly for their country.

**Cyd E. Courchesne**, OMM, CD, MD, CHE  
Chief Medical Officer  
Director General of Health Professionals  
Veterans Affairs Canada