

legislation and specifically on the regulations; to adjudicate pursuant to specific sections of the legislation where the board has sole jurisdiction; to act as a court of appeal for aggrieved applicants and recipients; and, on its own motion, to review decisions of district authorities to ensure that adjudication is consistent with the intent and purview of the legislation and that the legislation is applied uniformly throughout Canada. The board may at any time review and alter its own former decisions.

6.10.1.3 Bureau of Pensions Advocates

The Bureau of Pensions Advocates was established under the minister of veterans affairs by 1971 amendments to the Pension Act (SC 1970-71-72, c.31), effective March 30, 1971. The bureau provides an independent professional legal aid service to applicants for awards under the Pension Act. The chief pensions advocate is the chief executive officer and is assisted by pensions advocates, all of whom are lawyers, located at the bureau's head office in Ottawa and in district offices in major centres across Canada.

Pensions advocates prepare applications to the Canadian Pension Commission and represent applicants as counsel at entitlement board and pension review board hearings. No charge is made for these services.

During the fiscal year 1976-77 the bureau submitted 13,711 claims at all levels of adjudication. Of the 10,835 decisions rendered on bureau claims during the same period, 30.7% were wholly or partially granted.

6.10.2 Social and health services for veterans

6.10.2.1 Veterans services

In the closing months of 1977 a major organizational change occurred in the integration of health and social services in the veterans services branch of the department. The process of integration was expected to be completed in 1978.

Medical and dental services are provided for eligible veterans throughout Canada and to other persons for governments or federal departments at the request and expense of the authorities concerned. Prosthetic services provided to eligible veterans by the health and welfare department are paid for by the veterans affairs department.

The branch provides examination and treatment for pensionable disabilities to war veterans allowance recipients (but not to their dependents) and to veterans whose service and financial circumstances render them eligible. If a bed is available, any veteran may receive treatment in a departmental hospital on a guarantee of payment. Disability pensioners receive treatment for pensionable disabilities regardless of place of residence. Service to other veterans is available in Canada only. Home care may be provided to eligible veterans.

Treatment is provided in five active treatment hospitals at Halifax, NS, Montreal and Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Que., Winnipeg, Man., Calgary, Alta., and in three domiciliary care homes at Ottawa, Ont., Saskatoon, Sask., and Edmonton, Alta. The number of beds set up in these institutions at October 31, 1977, was 2,805. In Ottawa both acute and chronic cases requiring definitive treatment are admitted to the National Defence Medical Centre. A veterans' pavilion of 69 beds is located at St. John's General Hospital, St. John's, Nfld., 1,105 beds are available at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto, 150 beds in Quebec and 200 beds at West Saint John Community Hospital in Saint John, NB, for priority use of veterans, as well as some 2,590 beds in community hospitals in St. John's, Nfld., Fredericton, NB, Kingston, London and Thunder Bay, Ont., Regina and Saskatoon, Sask., Edmonton, Alta., and Vancouver and Victoria, BC.

The veterans services branch also administers a range of legislative measures providing social and financial benefits, provides support services to the Canadian Pension Commission, the War Veterans Allowance Board and services benevolent funds and extends counselling services to veterans and their dependents which include referral to other agencies.

Prominent among the financial benefits are those under the War Veterans Allowance Act and the Civilian War Pensions and Allowances Act consisting of monthly income maintenance payments based on service requirements, age or