

Statement of Principles
concerning
RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE

ICD CODES: 393 - 398

Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986
subsection 196B(2)

1. Being of the view that there is sound medical-scientific evidence that indicates that **rheumatic heart disease** and **death from rheumatic heart disease** can be related to operational service rendered by veterans, peacekeeping service rendered by members of Peacekeeping forces and hazardous service rendered by members of the Forces, the Repatriation Medical Authority determines, under subsection 196B(2) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*, that the factors that must as a minimum exist before it can be said that a reasonable hypothesis has been raised connecting **rheumatic heart disease** or **death from rheumatic heart disease** with the circumstances of that service, are:
 - (a) suffering from rheumatic fever before the clinical onset of rheumatic heart disease; or
 - (b) suffering a streptococcal A infection before the clinical onset of rheumatic heart disease; or
 - (c) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for rheumatic heart disease.
2. Subject to clause 3 (below) at least one of the factors set out in paragraphs **1(a) to 1(c)** must be related to any service rendered by a person.

3. The factor set out in paragraph 1(c) applies only where:
 - (a) the person's **rheumatic heart disease** was contracted prior to a period, or part of a period, of service to which the factor is related; and
 - (b) the relationship suggested between the **rheumatic heart disease** and the particular service of a person is a relationship set out in paragraph 8(1)(e), 9(1)(e), 70(5)(d), or 70(5A)(d) of the Act.
4. For the purposes of this Statement of Principles:

“ICD code” means a number assigned to a particular kind of injury or disease in the tenth edition of the *International Classification of Diseases* 9th Revision, effective date of 1 October 1993, copyrighted by the US Commission on Professional and Hospital Activities, and having the Library of Congress number 77-94472;

“rheumatic fever” means a febrile disease occurring as a delayed sequela of infections with group A beta-hemolytic streptococci and characterised by multiple focal inflammatory lesions of connective tissue especially involving the heart, blood vessels and joints with resultant arthritis, chorea, or carditis appearing alone or in combination, and attracting ICD codes 390, 391, or 392;

“rheumatic heart disease” means a chronic condition characterised by scarring and deformity of the heart valves and/or pericardium, and attracting ICD codes 393 to 398;

“streptococcal A infection” means invasion of the tissues, commonly of the throat or skin, by micro-organisms known as group A beta-hemolytic streptococci and which may result in a pyogenic, or suppurative, infection.

Dated this *Eighth* day of *March* 1995

The Common Seal of the)
 Repatriation Medical Authority)
 was affixed to this instrument)
 in the presence of:)

KEN DONALD
 CHAIRMAN