**Review of Service Treatment Records (STRs) for Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES)**

Instructor Lesson Plan

Time Required: 2.25 Hours

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| Lesson Description | |
| The information below provides the instructor with an overview of the lesson and the materials that are required to effectively present this instruction. | |
| TMS # | 4500913 |
| Prerequisites | Prior to this lesson, the Military Service Coordinator (MSC) should have completed the MSC Challenge Pre-D training. |
| target audience | The target audience for Review of STRs for IDES is the MSC.  Although this lesson is targeted to teach the MSC, it may be taught to other VA personnel as mandatory or refresher type training.. |
| Time Required | 2.25 hours |
| Materials/ TRAINING AIDS | Lesson materials:   * Review of STRs for IDES PowerPoint Presentation * Review of STRs for IDES Trainee Handouts (including freestanding SOAP Exercise) * Service Treatment records and Other Medical Evidence Job Aid * Compensation Service Intranet |
| Training Area/Tools | The following are required to ensure the trainees are able to meet the lesson objectives:   * Classroom or private area suitable for participatory discussions * Seating, writing materials, and writing surfaces for trainee note taking and participation * Handouts, which include a practical exercise * Large writing surface (easel pad, chalkboard, dry erase board, overhead projector, etc.) with appropriate writing materials * Computer with PowerPoint software to present the lesson material   Trainees require access to the following tools:   * VA TMS to complete the assessment * C&P Service Web Site * VBMS |

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| Pre-Planning | * Become familiar with all training materials by reading the Instructor Lesson Plan while simultaneously reviewing the corresponding PowerPoint slides. This will provide you the opportunity to see the connection between the Lesson Plan and the slides, which will allow for a more structured presentation during the training session. * Become familiar with the content of the trainee handouts and their association to the Lesson Plan. * Practice is the best guarantee of providing a quality presentation. At a minimum, do a complete walkthrough of the presentation to practice coordination between this Lesson Plan, the trainee handouts, and the PowerPoint slides and ensure your timing is on track with the length of the lesson. * Ensure that there are copies of all handouts before the training session. * When required, reserve the training room. * Arrange for equipment such as flip charts, an overhead projector, and any other equipment (as needed). * Talk to people in your office who are most familiar with this topic to collect experiences that you can include as examples in the lesson. * This lesson plan belongs to you. Feel free to highlight headings, key phrases, or other information to help the instruction flow smoothly. Feel free to add any notes or information that you need in the margins. |
| Training Day | * Arrive as early as possible to ensure access to the facility and computers. * Become familiar with the location of restrooms and other facilities that the trainees will require. * Test the computer and projector to ensure they are working properly. * Before class begins, open the PowerPoint presentation to the first slide. This will help to ensure the presentation is functioning properly. * Make sure that a whiteboard or flip chart and the associated markers are available. * Provide a sign in sheet and at the conclusion of the session, ensure that all trainees sign in. |

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| Introduction to Service Treatment Records | |
| INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION | Complete the following:   * Introduce yourself * Orient learners to the facilities * Ensure that all learners have the required handouts |
| time required | 0.25 hours |
| Purpose of Lesson  Explain the following: | This lesson is intended to give MSC an overview of how to review Service Treatment Records and other medical evidence. This lesson will contain discussions and exercises that will allow you to gain a better understanding of:   * definition * basic organization * general information found in STRs * how to identify the entrance and separation physical exam * how to efficiently review records * Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan (SOAP) format |
| Lesson Objectives  Discuss the following:  Slide 2  Handout 2 | In order to accomplish the purpose of this lesson, the MSC will be required to accomplish the following lesson objectives.  TheMSCwill be able to:   * define STRs * explain the organization of STRs * know how to locate x-rays, medical history forms, and other parts of STRs * identify the entrance and separation physical examinations and tab/annotate them for future reference * understand the SOAP format * identify methods for the review of STRs |
| Explain the following: | Each learning objective is covered in the associated topic. At the conclusion of the lesson, the learning objectives will be reviewed. |
| Motivation | The ability to review and tab/annotate STRs is vital to the development of a Servicemember IDES claim. It is important that trainees are familiar with reviewing STRS to effectively counsel SMs on potential claimed conditions |
| STAR Error code(s) | Task 2 |
| References  Slide 3  Handout 3 | Explain where these references are located in the workplace.  All M21-1 references are found in the [Live Manual Website](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/).   * [M21-1 Part III, Subpart iii, 2.A, General Information on Service Records](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/portal.html?encodedHash=%23!agent%2Fportal%2F554400000001034%2Farticle%2F554400000014154%2FM21-1-Part-III-Subpart-iii-Chapter-2-Section-A-General-Information-on-Service-Records) * [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, Chapter.2.B, Migration of Service Records and the Procedures for Obtaining Them](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/portal.html?encodedHash=%23!agent%2Fportal%2F554400000001034%2Farticle%2F554400000014155%2FM21-1-Part-III-Subpart-iii-Chapter-2-Section-B-Migration-of-Service-Records-and-the-Procedures-for-Obtaining-Them) * [M21-1 Part IV, Subpart ii, Chapter 2.A, Deciding Claims for Disability Compensation](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/portal.html?encodedHash=%23!agent%2Fportal%2F554400000001034%2Farticle%2F554400000014324%2FM21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-ii-Chapter-2-Section-A-Deciding-Claims-for-Disability-Compensation) * [M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, Chapter 2, Section D - Overview the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) and Initial Claims Development](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000033257/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-D-Overview-of-the-Integrated-Disability-Evaluation-System-IDES-and-Initial-Claims-Development) * [M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, Chapter 2, Section E - Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Responsibilities Based on Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) and Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) Outcomes](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046269/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-E-Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-VA-Responsibilities-Based-on-Medical-Evaluation-Board-MEB-and-Physical-Evaluation-Board-PEB-Outcomes) * [M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, Chapter 2, Section F - Special Situations Related to the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046277/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-F-Special-Situations-Related-to-the-Integrated-Disability-Evaluation-System-IDES) |

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| Topic 1: Review of Service Treatment Records | |
| Introduction | This topic will allow the trainee to understand the definition of STRs |
| Time Required | 1 hour |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | Topic objectives:   * Define Service Treatment Records * Explain the organization of STRs * Know how to locate x-rays, medical history forms, and other parts of STRs * Identify the entrance and separation physical examinations and tab/annotate them for future reference |
| Definition  Slide 4  Handout 4 | Explain to the trainee the definition of STRS.  STRs are the chronological records (electronic or paper) documenting the medical and/or dental care and treatment received primarily outside of a hospital (i.e. – outpatient) during service for each Servicemember. For many years, they were referred to as Service Medical Records (SMRs). |
| Obtaining STRs  Slide 5  Handout 4  M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, Chapter 2, Section B - Migration of Service Records and the Procedures for Obtaining Them | Take a moment to explain the importance of how the STR is obtained. Note with RMC and HAIMS you will often receive the STRs before we take development action on the claim. This action is due to the Automated STR using VBMS and happens when claims are established within VBMS or a claims folder is established.  STRs will be uploaded into VBMS from:   * + National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) via Personnel Information Exchanges System (PIES)   + Records Management Center (RMC)   + Healthcare Artifact and Image Management Solution (HAIMS)   JLV - VA employees must check JLV for the availability of these in-service treatment records anytime   * they are unable to obtain a complete set of a Veteran’s STRs through the other means described in this section, or * the available STRs do not show the alleged event, injury, or disease. |
| General Information found in STRs  Slide 6  Handout 4   |  | | --- | | General Information Not Found in STRs  *Slide 7-8*  *Handout 5* | |  | | Enlistment and Separation Exams  *Slides 9-10*  *Handout 5* | | * Entrance and separation physical exams   + IDES participants may have previous periods of service to reflect additional separation examinations.   + Entrance exams which are not located within the STRs may be found to be part of the claimant’s personnel records.   + Servicemember’s medical history   + All dental examination reports and records   + Clinical record cover sheets and summaries   + Outpatient medical and dental treatment records   + Physical profiles and Medical board proceedings   + Prescriptions for eyeglasses and orthopedic footwear  |  | | --- | | Explain to the trainees what information is generally not found in STRs   * Inpatient treatment records (clinical records) * Finance records * Mental health records, or * The Military Personnel Record Jacket (MPRJ), which may contain physical profiles and medical board proceedings * Off base treatment if self reffered are not included in STRS and therefore, not forwarded to NPRC   ***Note*** Servicemembers who obtain treatment at an "off-base" civilian facility on their own, medical or mental health records created during the course of treatment are not automatically associated with the STRs. These records are never forwarded for long-term storage to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). Rather, they are destroyed after a period of inactivity (five years for mental health records). | | Discuss the basic outline of Entrance (2807) and Separation Exams (2808) | |  | |

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| Topic 2: Components and Variations of SOAP | |
| INTRODUCTION | This topic will allow the trainee to understand the abbreviation SOAP |
| TIME REQUIRED | 0.25 hours |
| **OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points** | Topic Objectives:   * Understand the Components and Variations of SOAP |
| **Definition** | Explain to the trainees the definition SOAP.  The SOAP format is used by many medical professionals, not just military medical professionals. However, not all medical professionals use this abbreviation, and it is not unique to military personnel. |
| SOAP  Slide 11  *Handout* 6 | Explain to the trainee how the STRs are formatted and the SOAP format  The SOAP format found in treatment records came into use by the military in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. Generally, you would only look at the **S** and the **A** parts and not read the full note. You will also notice that many treatment records will use different abbreviations to signify each section. Some of these variations are included below:  **S** Subjective summary or history of the patient’s reason for seeking medical advice/help or symptoms experienced  **O** Objective finding by the treatment of provider during the examination  **A** Assessment (the diagnosis, or in some cases the provisional diagnosis pending further tests)  **P** Plan for treatment or medication prescribed |
| Example of SOAP  Slide 12-14  *Handout* 6 | Review example of SOAP with trainees. |

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| Topic 3: MSC Responsibilities for the Review of STRs | | | | |
| Introduction | | This topic will allow the trainee to learn efficient methods for the review of STRs as well as the proper handling of STRs. | | |
| Time Required | | 0.25 hours | | |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | | Topic objectives:   * Identify methods for the review of STRs   The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives:   * STR Review for IDES * Initial Interview Preparation * Initial Interview * Entrance and Separation Physical Exams Identification * Tabbing STRs in Paper Claim Folders * Bookmarking STRs in VBMS | | |
| **STR Review for IDES**  Slide 15  Handout 7  **Initial Interview Preparation**  Slide 16  Handout 7 | | The following guidelines provide the MSC with tools that will help with the efficient review STRs:   * Limit the review as much as possible. Look for key indicators of **chronic disabilities**. Do not waste time reading every page. * Locate and tab or bookmark in VBMS the entrance and separation physical exams in the STRs. Keep in mind that many of the IDES participants may not have a separation physical exam. * Tab/bookmark where a claimed condition is located if it is not mentioned on the separation physical exam. * Write down a list of chronic disabilities that may be subject to service connection to use as a reference during the initial interview for conditions the IDES participant may wish to claim.   Examples:   * + Radiologist report dated 10/01/09 right knee patella femoral syndrome.   + Surgical summary report dated 01/05/10 shrapnel removed right shoulder. Possible scar and residuals of retained shrapnel. * Prior to the initial interview, the MSC should review the STRs and identify documentation of issues that may be subject to service connection, such as:   + chronic diagnoses   + continuous symptoms, and   + conditions in need of ongoing treatment | | |
| **Initial Interview**  Slide 17  Handout 7  **Tabbibg/Bookmarking STRs in VBMS**  **Instructor Note**: If possible, provide a demonstration of bookmarking STRs in VBMS on a live case.  Slide 18/19  Handout 8-9 | | During the initial interview the:   * Servicemember identifies claimed conditions * MSC provides suggestions for claiming additional disabilities   + Although MSCs should bring to the attention of an IDES participant additional disabilities they identified during review of the participant’s medical records, the responsibility for formally placing the disabilities at issue ultimately lies with the participant.   ROs must follow the standardized steps in the table below to bookmark documents in the claims folder for the examiner’s review.  Important: While there are multiple bookmark types available in VBMS, when bookmarking evidence for an examiner’s review, ROs must use the medical bookmark.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Step** | **Action** | | 1 | Locate the document in which you want to add a bookmark. | | 2 | Click on the bookmark icon in the TOOLS column. The BOOKMARKS prompt box appears. | | 3 | For each document in the eFolder that contains information to be reviewed by a VA examiner, select the medical bookmark (heart shape icon).  ***Example***: The Veteran has claimed a right knee and left shoulder condition. A review of the STRs shows treatment for chondromalacia patella of the right knee and a rotator cuff tear of the left shoulder. An examiner will need to review the records. | | | |
|  | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 4 | In the expanded prompt box that appears, type the   * tab name, and * contention(s) name. | | | |
|  | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 5 | * Click the working notes bookmark (note paper icon). * In the expanded prompt box list   + the condition treated, and   + the pages where treatment can be found for the relevant conditions. | | | |
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| Practical Exercise – Components and Variation of SOAP | | |
| Time Required | | 0.25 hours |
| EXERCISE | | Have the trainee fill out the components of SOAP as discussed during the training. Also, list their variations usually found in Service Treatment Records (STRs)  Ask if there are any questions about the information presented in the exercise, and then proceed to the review. |
| Practical Exercise: Components and Variation of SOAP  Slide 20  Handout 11 | | S: Subjective  - Can also be listed as “Reason for Request,” “history of present illness,” or “Symptoms”  O: Objective  - Can also be listed as “Phsycial examination,” Consultation Report,” or “Laboratory Data”  A: Assessment  - Can also be listed as “Impression” or “Diagnosis”  P: Plan  - Can also be listed as “Treatment” or may be written beside  the assessment or diagnosis  What is the main difference between “Subjective” and “Objective” portions of a treatment report?  The subjective portion of a treatment report is defined by what the Servicemember or Veteran is being treated for when he/she visits the treatment provider. The subjective portion is the Veteran’s description of what pain, disability, injury or event led him/her to visit the treatment provider.  The objective portion of a treatment report is the statement from the treatment provider about the state of the patient’s disability, injury or disease.  Subjective look at the condition vs. objective look at the condition |

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| Lesson Review and Wrap-up | |
| **Introduction**  Discuss the following: | The Review of Service Treatment Records (STRS) for Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) is complete.  Review each lesson objective and ask the trainees for any questions or comments. |
| **Time Required** | 0.25 hours |
| **Lesson Objectives** | You have completed the Review of Service Treatment Records (STRS) for Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) lesson.  The trainee should be able to:   * define STRs * explain the organization of STRs * know how to locate x-rays, medical history forms, and other parts of STRs * identify the entrance and separation physical examinations and tab/annotate them for future reference * understand the SOAP format * identify methods for the IDES review of STRs |