

Monthly Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) and  
Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) Conference Call  
Compensation Service  
BDD/IDES/Mil Pay Staff (212A)  
May 14, 2019—2 PM ET

## Conference Call Notes

The Compensation Service BDD/IDES/Mil Pay Staff hosts this monthly conference call to announce updates and address issues and questions related to the BDD and IDES Programs. All Military Services Coordinators (MSCs), Disability Rating Activity Sites (DRAS), Regional Offices and other VA personnel supporting BDD and IDES are invited to participate.

This read-ahead is provided to facilitate discussion during the conference call. Meeting Call Notes including questions asked during the call will be posted on the [IDES](#) and [Pre-Discharge](#) intranet sites under **2019 Monthly Conference Call Schedule & Notes**. The call notes, PowerPoint presentation and Lync recording will also be available in TMS. The TMS number will be provided during the call.

Please sign-up for the [C&P Calendar Subscription Service](#) to receive notification that the read-ahead is available and for notification when the TMS number is active.

Call in numbers: 844-358-7954, 844-210-0201, 844-894-0415; Conference ID: 26520195  
<https://meet.RTC.VA.GOV/andrew.reese/84K5ZZFM>

## Topics for Discussion

### **MSC's and Time Management**

MSCs are reminded of the importance of working their BDD and/or IDES cases and updating systems in a timely manner. If your site has a heavy Veteran population and you have a lot of walk-in traffic, we recommend that you establish and post-office hours in order to set aside certain days/hours to perform BDD/IDES duties (interviews, database updates, etc.) to avoid interruptions. All MSCs should also set their schedule to attend the monthly BDD/IDES Call.

### **MSC (BDD/IDES Programs) Consistency Study for May 2019**

The Quality Review and Consistency Staff (214C) has scheduled the following MSC (BDD/IDES Programs) Consistency Study for May 2019:

- **MSC (BDD/IDES Programs)**: Tuesday, May 14 – Thursday, May 16, 2019
  - Topic: **System Compliance – Contentions and Corporate Flashes (TMS# 4500122)**
  - Audience: MSCs Only



*\*\*\*The study will be assigned Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup> no later than (NLT) 9am ET and will remain open until 9am Thursday the 16<sup>th</sup>. To ensure proper assignments in ACP (Adobe Captivate Prime), Training Managers are to ensure that TMS is updated to reflect the participants' most current information NLT COB the Friday before the scheduled studies.*

*NOTE: These studies CANNOT be self-assigned in TMS and if you do not get the enrollment email from Adobe Captivate Prime, you should contact your Training Managers for assistance. If you received the email but have access issues, you should contact the VBA's Adobe Captivate Prime Support Team.*

## **MSC Training Conference Index Card Questions**

We realized that some of the index card questions and answers from the last MSC training conference were missed on the document posted to the IDES Intranet site. These questions have been added to the document and will be posted to both the IDES and BDD Intranet sites as soon as they are approved for release.

## **Applicability of General VBA Policy/Procedures in BDD and IDES Claims**

All BDD and IDES specific processing requirements are currently specified in M21-1 III.i.2 However, compensation claims submitted as part of the BDD and IDES process are nonetheless VA claims, and as such, are generally subject to the broader rules and requirements in place for typical VA claims.

To the extent possible, the BDD and IDES sections of the M21-1 include references to applicable general claim processing requirements. For regular/recurring, or typical situations, the BDD and IDES sections will reiterate any applicable general (non-IDES/BDD specific) requirements and/or include a link to the applicable manual reference. However, it is not feasible to restate all applicable VBA requirements within the BDD and IDES sections of the M21-1. Therefore, BDD and IDES claim processors must consider the wider M21-1 when processing BDD and IDES claims, particularly when handling uncommon or irregular situations.

Clearly, there are important procedural differences between the general claim process and the BDD and IDES processes; and there are several BDD and IDES specific requirements that are not applicable to non-IDES/BDD claims. As such, standard VBA requirements and BDD/IDES requirements will often be dissimilar. It is these distinctions that are specifically described in M21-1 III.i.2. When processing BDD and IDES claims, the procedures specified in these sections should be considered authoritative when differences between BDD/IDES and general procedures exist. However, when no BDD or IDES specific requirement or procedure exists, general VBA policy should be considered applicable to compensation claims submitted by BDD and IDES participants.

These concepts are also discussed in [M21-1 Prologue](#); specifically, the prologue states:

- The M21-1 should be read in harmony with the regulations and all the service's collective guidance.
- M21-1 guidance should be applied on a case-by-case basis, using sound judgment based on the law and basic adjudication principles
- Proper application of the M21-1 requires users to read multiple blocks of content in various locations throughout the manual to identify and apply the guidance applicable to a case.
- M21-1 guidance will often include references and links to relevant content; however, these references are by no means an all-inclusive list of relevant guidance



Questions about the applicability of M21-1 requirements in BDD/IDES claims should be directed to Compensation Service via the [IDES Mailbox](#) or [Pre-Discharge BDD Mailbox](#).

## **IDES Specific Topics**

### **Stressor Development in Active Duty IDES Cases**

Development for stressors is unnecessary when the evidence shows an initial diagnosis of PTSD in service. As such, [M21-1 III.i.2.D.4.c](#) specifies that it is not necessary for MSC's to develop for stressors in PTSD claims from active duty IDES participants. These participants will receive VA examinations in-service, where a diagnosis of PTSD would be sufficient to support a grant of service-connection on a direct basis. Alternatively, VA examination results showing no PTSD diagnosis would also make stressor development unnecessary.

The participant's duty status (not the component) should be considered when determining the need for stressor development—whether the participant is a member of the National Guard or Reserve (NG/R) is immaterial. If the participant is serving on active duty, even as a member of the NG/R, [M21-1 III.i.2.D.4.c](#) stipulates that the MSC is not required to develop for a stressor.

There are potential circumstances that might complicate granting PTSD on a direct basis, such as diagnoses that existed prior to active service. The question of aggravation may need to be considered in these cases, but it remains unnecessary to develop for in-service stressors.

#### **Do we need to send out the PTSD stressor form for active duty BDD claims?**

No, since the examination will occur while the Servicemember is still on active duty, verification of the stressor is not needed. See [M21-1,III.i.2.D.4.c](#) as it would also apply to BDD claims.

### **Broker EP 689 to DRAS when all Development is Complete**

MSCs are reminded of the requirement to broker the EP 689 to DRAS when development is complete. In most cases, this will be when examinations are completed and in the eFolder. Further, before the 689 is brokered, MSCs must ensure that all VBMS tracked items have been resolved and updated to reflect the appropriate disposition. These actions are specifically required by [M21-1 III.i.2.D.7.d](#) and must be completed in all IDES cases.

It is highly recommended that MSCs supporting the IDES program have a VBMS user role that allows brokering (such as *Intake Analyst*). However, any MSC without the capability to broker must coordinate with their supervisor or another employee with brokering access, to ensure all EP 689s are brokered to DRAS upon completion of development.

#### **Do we change the status before brokering? Do we leave the status OPEN? or change to RW?**

There is currently no requirement for MSCs to change the claim status of the EP 689 when closing out the tracked items and/or brokering.



**Providence DRAS:** If the 689 is in the MSC's work queue, and they are already using *Complete Work Item* to send the 689, then it would be helpful if the MSC was to update the claim status to *Ready for Decision (RFD)* when brokering cases to Providence.

**Important:** MSCs should never change the claim status of the 689 to RFD in any Army case as doing so may disrupt processes currently in place at Seattle DRAS.

### **Transfer of Pending Rating EPs after Final IDES Ratings**

When non-IDES issues are deferred in final ratings, the rating EPs must be continued at authorization in accordance with [M21-1 III.i.2.E.4.d](#). These EPs/issues will be managed by NWQ and worked outside of the IDES program. To ensure these EPs are routed to an appropriate VSC (and not directly back to the DRAS), the DRAS must change the claim label to the appropriate non-IDES claim label. These EPs must be redistributed by NWQ. Importantly, DRAS **must not** broker these EPs to other stations.

### **Including Dependents on BEL**

[M21-1 III.i.2.E.3.I](#) stipulates that when the information required to establish eligible dependents is of record at the time of the proposed rating, the BEL must indicate any eligible dependents. The reference also specifies additional language that must be added to the BEL when no 21-686c is of record.

The Letter Creator Tool is now being updated to prompt users to specify dependency information, so that the language required by [M21-1 III.i.2.E.3.I](#) will be populated into generated the BEL. However, at this time, all BELs generated by Letter Creator Tool will indicate that participant will be paid at the rate for a single Veteran with no dependents.

Until the Letter Creator Tool is updated, DRAS personnel must manual update the dependency status in the BEL to indicate the accurate dependency status of the participant, and when no 21-686c is of record, the language specified by [M21-1 III.i.2.E.3.I](#) must also be added.

### **MSC Notes in VTA to confirm when SM not filing a VA Claim**

MSCs must select NO for the Servicemember Filing VA claim in VTA when a participant specifically declines to file a VA claim as documented by [M21-1 III.i.D.4.a \(step 5\)](#). Compensation Service is working changes for this field which will be implemented with the next VTA release. Until the release is in production, and NO is selected, please add a note in VTA and confirm the selection is correct before brokering to DRAS.

### **Air Force IDES PEBLO Conference**

From April 23 to April 26, 2019, VBA representatives from Compensation Service IDES Staff and the Providence DRAS participated in the Air Force (AF) IDES PEBLO Conference in San Antonio, TX. VBA provided an Overview of Compensation Service Benefits, as well as MSC and DRAS Roles and Responsibilities. VBA also participated in a Q&A panel to address any questions that arose during the week. Several PEBLOs expressed a great working relationship with their AF MSCs. All MSCs are commended for their dedicated service.

### **Current IDES Program Timeliness**



As outreach specialists and VA's frontline contact with SMs and Veterans, it is vital that we are realistic in our communications regarding claims processing times. Below is the current program timeliness data (ADC) as of May 5, 2019.

April 2019	IDES
Claim Dev (AD/NAD)	6/15
Exams to PEBLO	2
Medical Stage	44
Proposed Ratings	46/49
Recon Ratings	10
Exit Interviews	8
Final Ratings (AD)	45

Source: VTA Completed Reports May 5, 2019 (9am ET)

## VTA Reminders

### **Returning Exam Results to PEBLO, Exam End and Medical Evaluation End Dates**

We are seeing an uptick in cases where VTA is updated with the Medical Evaluation End Date (MEED) (which is the signal to PEBLOs that exams are complete), then the MSC discovers an exam was not completed, and the MEB has completed the NARSUM. MSCs are reminded that they should wait until all exams are complete and **verified** before entering the MEED. If for some reason, exams were provided to the PEBLO, and it is then determined a requested exam was not completed, the MSC should **immediately** inform the PEBLO that an exam is forthcoming so the MTF has all exams for the NARSUM.

**Exam End Date:** Date the provider(s) released ALL exams (SHA/GM/Specialty) and the complete medical evaluation report(s).

**Medical Evaluation End Date:** Date medical evaluation report delivered or made available to PEBLO.

### **SHA and Other Exam Fields**

We are seeing cases where the following fields are being populated incorrectly. The fields and their definitions are below. If you need to ensure the data you are inputting is correct, hover over the question mark next to the data field name.

**SHA Provider:** Select the provider that is conducting the SHA and all other exams if being conducted by SHA provider.

**SHA Exam Site:** Location of the Exam Provider.

**SHA Exam Requested Start Date:** Date MSC enters request for SHA and request for all other exams if being conducted by SHA provider. This date will auto-populate the Med Eval Start Date in new cases.

**SHA Returned Date:** Enter date last exam is received from SHA provider.



Other Provider: Only use this field if the SHA provider is not performing all exams. Select provider conducting other exams.

**Other Provider Exam Site:** Only use this field if the SHA provider is not performing all exams. Select location of the provider conducting other exams.

**Other Exam Requested Date:** Only use this field if the SHA provider is not performing all exams. Enter other exams requested date.

**Other Exam Returned Date:** Only use this field if the SHA provider is not performing all exams. Enter date last exam is received from other provider.

The same provider should not be in SHA Provider and Other Provider. Once exams are returned and provided to PEBLO, the Other Exam Fields should not be used to order additional exams, even if the DRAS determines exams are insufficient. The DRAS will order the exams, and the MSC will not update exam fields with the DRAS exams. Contact the [IDES Mailbox](#) with questions or if you need clarification on how to use the data fields.

This is an example of improper data input (exams given to PEBLO 3/6 and NARSUM completed):

SHA Provider: ?	QTC	QTC should not be in both Provider fields
SHA Exam Site: ?	Fort xx	
SHA Exam Requested Date: ?	01/22/2019	
SHA Exam Returned Date: ?	03/04/2019	QTC should not be in both Provider fields
Other Provider: ?	QTC	
Other Exam Site: ?	Fort xx	Date should not be here.
Other Exam Requested Date: ?	04/11/2019	
Other Exam Returned Date: ?	mm/dd/yyyy	Date can't be before any above dates.
Exam End Date: ?	03/04/2019	
Medical Evaluation End Date: ?	mm/dd/yyyy	Date was removed when additional exam was ordered.

I have a question regarding rescheduling missed exams. Currently, EMS does not allow a "duplicate" exam request when it reads that a contention is currently under exam. However, I've had QTC deliver/cancel a request that a SM has missed and, it needs to be requested again, but I'm unable to do so because QTC is reading it as open. Do we need to open a ticket for this issue? I've also entered fake "placeholder" contentions as a workaround.

If you have documentation from QTC that the Servicemember failed to report to the exam, you may cancel the exam request. If you are unable to cancel it, request that QTC cancels the exam so the request can be input again. A help ticket may be needed if you are still unable to submit the new exam request.

### **Is there any update regarding the possible SHA Gen Med requirements for Non-Active Duty Guard and Reserve members?**

Discussions are on-going with DoD about this subject; at this time, MSCs must continue to request SHA examinations in all IDES cases.

### **Under the timelines is notes we have two days to provide the PEBLO with the exams. QTC tends to upload the exams on Fridays after business hours. We have already gone past our two days before we even see them in VBMS.**

Two days are the part of the 32 days allotted for MSC activity within the medical evaluation stage. It is recognized that exam results may be sometimes released after business hours and on Fridays, and two days is not feasible in every case or situation. However, MSCs should make every effort to meet this target to the fullest extent possible; while cases will inevitably exceed this goal for circumstances outside the MSCs control, the MSC should strive return exams results PEBLO in an *average* time of two days or less. VTA notes should be used to explain any extended delay.

### **Have we found out why ExamTrack is not showing us delivered exams and we must check by SSN every day?**

There is a programming issue and it is currently being worked.

### **VTA Training**

Live VTA Training that occurs on the third Tuesday and Wednesday of each month has ended. An on-line course has been created, and an announcement on how to access is forthcoming.

### **BDD Specific Topics**

#### **BDD Rating EP Cancellations**

We have been informed by the Winston-Salem RO intake sites that they have noticed some BDD rating EPs have been cancelled by other ROs while they are waiting for the documents to be scanned into VBMS by VCIP. Do not cancel any EP if documents are missing from the VBMS eFolder without first contacting the MSC that established the EP. An examination request should already be in the eFolder since the EP 336 has already been changed to a rating EP. If you have any EPs cancelled in error by another RO, please send all the details including the claim number to the [Pre-Discharge mailbox](#).

#### **Current BDD Program Timeliness**

As outreach specialists and VA's frontline contact with SMs and Veterans, it is vital that we are realistic in our communications regarding claims processing times. Below is the current program timeliness data as of May 8, 2019.



May 8, 2019	BDD
Completed FYTD	20,219
Receipts FYTD	21,444
Pending	4,438
# Completed w/in 30 Days of Discharge	10,318
% Completed w/in 30 Days of Discharge	51%
Average Days Pending	84.4
Avg. Days to Complete FYTD	54.71

**Source:** Tableau BDD History Report and PA&I Daily Snapshot, May 9, 2019

### **From the Pre-Discharge BDD Mailbox**

**Question:** I received a claim 180 to 90 days prior to discharge, but the Servicemember was not available for 45 days for examinations. However, later, the Servicemember became available for examination for 45 days, and the Servicemember still had 90 days before discharge when they became available for examination for 45 days. Is this claim eligible for the BDD program?

**Answer:** Yes, if the Servicemember is available for examinations and still has 90 to 180 days left on active duty, the claim is eligible for the BDD program. Use your best judgement on a case by case basis. If you need further guidance, contact the [Pre-Discharge mailbox](#).

**Question:** Do MSCs need to enter EFT/direct deposit information?

**Answer:** Per [M21-1 III.ii.3.C.1.c](#), MSCs should continue to enter the EFT/direct deposit information when it is provided.

**Question:** Can a VHA provider direct an MSC to order a medical opinion?

**Answer:** No, only VBA can determine if a medical opinion is needed. If the MSC is unsure if a medical opinion is needed, contact the DRAS for IDES claims or for BDD claims contact the [Pre-Discharge mailbox](#).

**Question:** When a Servicemember claims PTSD, do we need a diagnosis/history of PTSD symptoms before we request the PTSD exam?

**Answer:** No, request the SHA and any claimed specialty exams (eyes, ears, mental, dental, and TBI) for all IDES and BDD claims regardless if there is a diagnosis/history of symptoms. The Servicemember is active duty when they submit their claim, therefore, the claim itself is an in-service event warranting an exam.

**Question:** For MST claims, don't all RO's have an MST mailbox or coordinator that receives an e-mail then reaches out to the Servicemember?

**Answer:** The Women Veteran's Coordinator/MST Outreach Coordinator list can be found [here](#). Contact the MST Outreach Coordinator or Women's Veterans Coordinator that is geographically closest to the Servicemember to complete the requirements per [M21-1 IV.ii.1.D.5.f](#).





## Open Floor

**Will the IDES section in the manual be updated soon to reflect the new guidance from last call on processing reopened claims/N&M evidence?**

M21-1 changes incorporating the AMA-related guidance have been submitted to the Manual Staff for processing. An estimate for publication has not yet been provided.

**Are the SHARP reviews also impacting the Final Rating Decision/Award Promulgation on the back end as well? I'm starting to see delays from 90-120 days after discharge rather than 60 days.**

Yes. Reviews and corrective exam requests to SHARP have impacted IDES Final Rating Timeliness.

## Next Teleconferences

The next BDD/IDES Call is scheduled for Tuesday, June 11, 2019 at 2PM ET. Please submit IDES questions and proposed topics for discussion to the [IDES Mailbox](#), and BDD questions and proposed topics for discussion to the [Pre-Discharge BDD Mailbox](#) no later than COB, Thursday, May 30, 2019.

The next BDD/IDES Coaches Call is scheduled for Thursday, June 13, 2019 at 2PM ET. Please submit IDES questions and proposed topics for discussion to the [IDES Mailbox](#), and BDD questions and proposed topics for discussion to the [Pre-Discharge BDD Mailbox](#) no later than COB, Thursday, May 30, 2019.

