Monthly Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) and

Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) Conference Call Read Ahead

Compensation Service

BDD/IDES/Mil Pay Staff (212A)

January 14, 2020—2 PM ET

The Compensation Service BDD/IDES/Mil Pay Staff hosts this call to announce updates and address issues and questions related to the BDD/IDES Programs. All Military Services Coordinators (MSCs), Disability Rating Activity Sites (DRAS), Regional Offices and other VA personnel supporting BDD/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](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/IDES.asp) and [Pre-Discharge](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/predischarge.asp) intranet sites under **2020 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](http://vbacodmoint1.vba.va.gov/bl/21/calendar/cal_Subscribe.asp) to receive notification that the read-ahead is available and for notification when the TMS number is active.

Call in info: [Join Skype Meeting](https://meet.RTC.VA.GOV/andrew.reese/JDC6LJZ6)

844-358-7954, 844-210-0201 or 844-894-0415. Code is 496808907#.

**Call-in Information and New Guidance**

The IM/Chat session will be disabled during the call. Ask questions over the phone during the call or send an email to the appropriate staff corporate mailbox.

When the presenter mutes the audience for questions, follow the guidance below to unmute:

1. If you are dialed in through your computer (select Use Skype for Business when signing into Skype), you must find your name in the attendee list and unmute yourself by right clicking the microphone.
2. If you are dialed in through a phone (select “Call me at” or “Don’t Join Audio” when signing into Skype), unmute yourself using \*6.
3. Do not unmute yourself if you do not need to speak.

Topics for Discussion

Solid Start

VA has created the Solid Start Program which will support Veterans in navigating their benefits and ensure they have access to any resources they may need. This program/action is not an MSC responsibility. Solid Start is under the responsibility of BAS and is part of the Military to Civilian Pathway (M2CReady). A link to [Solid Start](http://vaww.blog.va.gov/heyvba/?p=13143) is provided to assist in getting acquainted with the program.

MSC SharePoint Site

All BDD/IDES MSC Coaches are reminded to keep your RO’s BDD and IDES data updated on the [Compensation Service 212A MSC Info SharePoint Site](https://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/212Procedures/212D_MSC_Info/SitePages/Home.aspx). Contact andrew.reese@va.gov with any questions or for assistance.

Exam Management System (EMS) Defect Job Aid

**The Medical Disability Examination Program Office (MDEPO) has updated the** [Exam Management System (EMS) Defect Job Aid](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/contractexams/docs/EMS%20Defect%20Job%20Aid.pdf)**located on the MDEPO** [publications](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/contractexams/publications.htm)**page. The EMS Defect Job Aid provides guidance on actions to be taken when EMS issues are encountered. Contact the Contract Exam mailbox,** ContractExam.VBAVACO@va.gov**, with any questions regarding this job aid.**

Supplemental Language Matrix

**The serious illness/injury (SI) or very serious illness/injury (VSI) priority language has been added to the Supplemental Language Matrix located on the** [Exam Request Language for Contracted Exams (Exam Requests via Exam Management System in VBMS)](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000105052/Supplemental-Language-Matrix) **page. This supplemental language is required for all exam requests submitted through VBMS for SI/VSI priority claims. As detailed in** [M21-1 III.ii.1.D.4.a](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000020037/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-1%2C-Section-D---Claims-That-Require-Priority-Processing#4a)**,** a *serious illness or injury* is defined as a disability that:

* occurred as a result of participation in a military operation, and
* will likely result in discharge from military service.

The Department of Defense (DoD) determines whether a Servicemember is:

* VSI
* SI, or
* not seriously ill or injured (NSI).

IDES Specific Topics

**Updated IDES Procedures Published in M21-1**

Updates to [M21-1 III.i.2.E](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046269/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-E---Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-%28VA%29-Responsibilities-Based-on-Medical-Evaluation-Board-%28MEB%29-and-Physical-Evaluation-Board-%28PEB%29-Outcomes) were published on November 22, 2019. All MSCs and DRAS personnel are encouraged to review the [Key Changes Document](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046269/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-E---Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-%28VA%29-Responsibilities-Based-on-Medical-Evaluation-Board-%28MEB%29-and-Physical-Evaluation-Board-%28PEB%29-Outcomes) and take specific note of the changes (in yellow highlighting).

The guidance in [M21-1 III.i.2.E](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046269/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-E---Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-%28VA%29-Responsibilities-Based-on-Medical-Evaluation-Board-%28MEB%29-and-Physical-Evaluation-Board-%28PEB%29-Outcomes) generally relates to DRAS responsibilities and processes, but the section also covers some MSC activity/requirements associated with MEB and PEB outcomes (to include processing findings of fitness and other disenrollments, and completing exit interviews).

The November update largely incorporates IDES process changes which have been previously announced and discussed in depth on this teleconference in past months. One *new* change, which has not been previously announced, is discussed in detail below under the heading ***Required Action in Return to Duty Disenrolled IDES Cases.***

Further, a minor change was published to [M21-1 III.i.2.D](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000033257/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-D---Overview-of-the-Integrated-Disability-Evaluation-System-%28IDES%29-and-Initial-Claims-Development) (3.d) to indicate that updates to service information should be made in VBMS, not Participant Profile (as previously discussed on the November 2019 IDES/BDD Teleconference).

**Required Action in Return to Duty (RTD)/Disenrolled IDES Cases**

[M21-1](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046269/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-E---Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-%28VA%29-Responsibilities-Based-on-Medical-Evaluation-Board-%28MEB%29-and-Physical-Evaluation-Board-%28PEB%29-Outcomes) [III.i.2.E.2.a](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046269/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-E---Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-%28VA%29-Responsibilities-Based-on-Medical-Evaluation-Board-%28MEB%29-and-Physical-Evaluation-Board-%28PEB%29-Outcomes) outlines the required VA actions in cases involving participants who are found fit and RTD or are disenrolled from IDES for any other reason (to include administrative and other non-medical discharges).

Previously (before the recent manual update noted above), these procedures indicated that this action would be taken by either the MSC or the DRAS, based on which office had current jurisdiction of the Veteran’s file. In the past, DRAS involvement in this process was necessary due to limitations associated with paper claims folders and VBMS rules that prevented users from acting on end products (EPs) outside of user’s jurisdiction. However, jurisdiction of the eFolder/EP will no longer impede the MSC’s ability to take the necessary actions, and [M21-1 III.i.2.E.2.a](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046269/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-E---Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-%28VA%29-Responsibilities-Based-on-Medical-Evaluation-Board-%28MEB%29-and-Physical-Evaluation-Board-%28PEB%29-Outcomes) now shows this as the MSC’s responsibility in all cases.

The MSC actions required in these instances are summarized as follows:

* prepare the appropriate letter (as required by [M21-1 III.i.2.E.2.b](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046269/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-E---Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-%28VA%29-Responsibilities-Based-on-Medical-Evaluation-Board-%28MEB%29-and-Physical-Evaluation-Board-%28PEB%29-Outcomes), and discussed further below under the heading***Notification Letters to IDES Participants who are RTD/Disenrolled****)*
* complete the exit interview
* clear the pending EP 689, and
* establish a rating EP (if the participant is a NAD Veteran, who has not received a final rating).

**Note:** [M21-1 III.i.2.E.2.a](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046269/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-E---Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-%28VA%29-Responsibilities-Based-on-Medical-Evaluation-Board-%28MEB%29-and-Physical-Evaluation-Board-%28PEB%29-Outcomes) assumes that the PEBLO will provide notification of the participant’s disenrollment from IDES to the MSC. In the event that DRAS first receives evidence of a participant’s disenrollment, the DRAS should notify the MSC assigned, so that the MSC can confirm the disenrollment with the PEBLO assigned and complete the actions required by III.i.2.E.2.a.

**Notification Letters to IDES Participants Who Are Returned to Duty or Disenrolled**

As discussed above, any IDES participant who is returned to duty or disenrolled from the IDES program must be provided proper notification from VA regarding the disposition of any VA claim/application that was submitted as part of IDES; MSCs must prepare these letters as necessary and provide the letter to the participant during the exit interview.

[M21-1 III.i.2.E.2.b](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046269/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-E---Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-%28VA%29-Responsibilities-Based-on-Medical-Evaluation-Board-%28MEB%29-and-Physical-Evaluation-Board-%28PEB%29-Outcomes). discusses these letters in detail, and is summarized as follows:

* The RTD/Disenrollment Letters are available (under the *VSC Menu*) in the [Letter Creator Tool.](http://vbacodmoint1.vba.va.gov/bl/21/LetterGenerator/LG.asp)
* Three types of IDES disenrollment letters are available. Select the appropriate one according to the specific circumstances of the case:
	+ IDES Return to Active Service
	+ IDES Return to Reserves/National Guard
* IDES Disenrollment OTH Discharge

**Requirement for Line of Duty (LOD) with NAD IDES Referrals**

As discussed on November 2019 Teleconference, all NAD IDES referrals must include the LOD (or equivalent memo) indicating that all referred conditions are considered to have been incurred in the line of duty.

Upon receipt of a NAD IDES referral that does not include the required LOD/memo, the MSC should return the referral to the PEBLO and remove the *Prepare Claim Start Date* from VTA.

The policy has been communicated to DoD; however, many locations are reporting that PEBLOs have not yet been made aware or were not provided guidance for handling these situations. We understand that some Services may still be determining how these situations should be handled; notwithstanding, MSCs must not accept NAD IDES referrals that do not include the requisite LOD/memo.

**VBMS Compliance**

MSCs are reminded to update VBMS appropriately, to include:

1. Ensure forms are upload separately using the proper naming conventions.
2. Ensure forms are not uploaded upside down.
3. Use the space provided in SECTION IV: CLAIM INFORMATION of the VA Form 21-526EZ when listing service members current disability. If additional space is needed to list additional disabilities, use VA Form 21-4138.
4. Ensure current version of all forms are used.
5. Ensure steps 1-5 are followed in Brokering to DRAS topic covered in November 2019 IDES/BDD read ahead.

**Brokering Cases to DRAS**

On the November 2019 IDES/BDD Teleconference, all MSCs were informed of the new process for brokering cases to DRAS. **MSCs should be brokering the case to the DRAS *before* entering the Medical Evaluation (ME) End Date in VTA. This will ensure the DRAS is immediately able to begin work on the proposed rating once the MSC enters the ME End Date. MSCs must ensure post-exam action is completed in the following sequence:**

1. Verify that all examinations have been completed.
2. Ensure that all examination results are in the VBMS eFolder.
3. Close out examination tracked items (and any others in which the development has been resolved).
4. Broker the case to the DRAS.
5. Enter the *Medical Evaluation End Date in* VTA.

**Important: MSCs must have the *Intake Analyst Role* associated with their VBMS User Profile to complete the brokering action. Please refer to the November 2019 IDES/BDD Teleconference read ahead for additional details.**

**Handling Cases Involving a Participant Too Disabled to Travel to Examination**

MSCs, PEBLOs, and physicians at MTFs are responsible for determining whether a participant is too disabled to travel to an examination. MSCs are reminded that if a claimant is terminally ill, SI/VSI, hardship, etc., and is not able to attend exams, MSCs should contact the DRAS and take actions per [M21-1 III.i.2.D.6.n.](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#6) Also, note in the table how VTA should be updated when no examinations will be requested.

**Audio Examinations Versus Audio Screening**

MSCs are reminded that audio exams (DBQs) should only be requested when the condition is specifically raised as part of the claim. When hearing loss or tinnitus is claimed or referred, an audio exam is appropriate. Otherwise, audio screening is completed as part of the Separation Health Assessment (SHA). If the audio screening is positive for hearing loss or there are abnormal findings, examiners will schedule and complete a full audio DBQ.

**Military Services Coordinator (MSC) 2020 Conference**

The National Training Conference for MSCs will be held in FY2020. Our staff does not have a date, location or any additional details currently. The Office of Field Operations (OFO) will coordinate with the District and Regional Offices to arrange MSC attendance. MSCs should receive notification and further information through those channels. Our staff would like to gather your ideas for topics and any suggestions you have. Please send these to michelle.collins@va.gov.

**IDES Policy and Procedures**

MSCs are reminded that you should be following VA IDES policy and procedures. If you are getting push-back, pressure or conflicting guidance from PEBLOs/MTFs, contact your Coach or the IDES Box (based on your procedures) for clarification/guidance.

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) for December 2019.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **December 2019** | **IDES (AD/NAD)** |
| **Claim Dev**  | **9/7** |
| **Medical Stage** | **44/45** |
| **Proposed Ratings** | **23/38** |
| **Recon Ratings**  | **17/22** |
| **Exit Interviews** | **8/7** |
| **Final Ratings** | **25/na** |

 **Source:** VTA Completed Reports January 6, 2020 (9am ET)

VTA Reminders

**SHA and Other Exam Returned Dates**

MSCs are reminded that the date entered in the SHA and Other Exam Returned Date data fields is the date **ALL** exams are returned by the assigned vendor. We have discovered that some MSCs are going into exam data bases, noting the date of the SHA Exam and putting that date in the SHA Exam Returned Date data field. This is incorrect.

**Note:** When entering the Exam Returned Dates, ensure you are inputting the dates based on the vendor assigned. When a case has two vendors, recent research has indicated that some MSCs are inputting the returned date of one vendor in the SHA and Other Returned Date fields.

Incorrect ex: VHA is the SHA vendor and QTC is the Other vendor. VHA releases all exams and the MSC enters the VHA Release Date in the SHA and Other Returned Date fields. This is incorrect.

Correct ex: VHA is the SHA vendor and QTC is the Other vendor. The date VHA releases all exams is entered in the SHA Released Date field and the date QTC releases all exams is entered in the Other Returned Date field.

**VTA Data Fields and Definitions**

All users are reminded to click the question mark (?) next to the data field if they have any concerns/questions on what the data field requires/needs. We are seeing incorrect data being input when the field definition clearly states what data should be entered.

Ex: “**SHA Returned Date:** Enter date last exam is received from SHA provider”. This speaks to the previous topic where some MSCs are inputting the date of the actual SHA.

BDD Specific Topics

**Increasing BDD Participation in FY20**

One of the goals for FY20 is to increase participation in the BDD program. In FY19, we received over 35,000 BDD claims and completed 43 percent within 30 days of discharge since the redesign of the program. With an estimated 200,000 Servicemembers transitioning annually, we are encouraging all intake sites and Regional Offices (ROs) to actively participate in marketing the BDD program with an emphasis placed on Servicemembers submitting their claim within the required 180 to 90 days prior to separation. Service members are encouraged to submit their claim as close to 180 days before discharge as possible to ensure their exams and rating decision are completed prior to discharge.

We are also asking MSCs/RO Supervisors to engage with the installation Transition Benefit Advisors and other transition support staff to ensure Servicemembers are made aware of the BDD program. Please also share the [BDD Promotional YouTube video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTSujFDP-58&feature=youtu.be) published by the BDD staff that can increase awareness of BDD program.

**BDD-Excluded Claims Establishment**

There have been issues with BDD-Excluded claims established with an EP 336. As a reminder, all BDD-Excluded claims must be established with an EP 010, 110, or 020 as appropriate to the claim type (original <8 issues, original 8+ issues, new, increase, or reopen) per [M21-1 III.i.2.A.2.h](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014099/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-A-General-Information-on-Pre-Discharge-Claims#2a). Then, attach an appropriate non-BDD claim label. For example, an original BDD-Excluded claim with eight or more issues would be established as a diary EP 010 with an *Initial Compensation 8+ Issues* claim label.

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 January 7, 2020.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **January 7, 2020** | **BDD** |
| **Completed FYTD** | **10,073** |
| **Receipts FYTD** | **7,567** |
| **Pending** | **3,883** |
| **# Completed w/in 30 Days of Discharge** | **5,700** |
| **% Completed w/in 30 Days of Discharge** | **56.6%** |
| **Avg. Days to Complete FYTD** | **42.4** |

**Source:** Tableau BDD History Report and C&P Daily Snapshot, January 8, 2020

Open Floor

Next Teleconferences

The next BDD/IDES Call is scheduled for Tuesday, February 11, 2020 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 close of business (COB), Friday January 31, 2020.

The next BDD/IDES Coaches Call is scheduled for March 2020. The invite and exact date of the call will be sent as soon as possible.