



Pension and Fiduciary (P&F) Service

Pension Quality Call

Date: January, 30, 2020

TMS: # 4551006

AGENDA TOPICS

[ITEM 1: STAR QUALITY ANALYSIS](#)

[ITEM 2: PENALTY PERIOD CALCULATOR](#)

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[ITEM 6: PAYING SC BURIAL BASED ON DIC
CLOSING, QUESTIONS, NEXT QUALITY CALL](#)

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AGENDA ITEMS

Agenda item: STAR Quality Analysis

Presenter: Wakita Thompson,
Analyst

Target Audience:

QRT and Management

Discussion:

A trend analysis was conducted regarding errors cited on National Pension Quality Reviews completed during Quarter (Q) one of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020; October 1, 2019 through December 2019.

The chart on the next page shows a breakdown in the number of National STAR Quality Reviews completed in Q1 FY20. In addition to the total number of errors cited, as a result of the reviews completed.

Month of National STAR Review	Non-Rating (Authorization)				Rating			
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total # of Claims Reviewed	44	22	22	88	46	26	26	98
Total # of Claims with Errors	12	6	4	22	9	6	5	20
Total # of Errors Cited	13	10	4	27	17	9	8	34
Benefit Entitlement (BE) Totals	2	2	3	7	2	2	5	9

Errors by Category

The chart below show a breakdown of errors cited, by category for FY20 Q1.

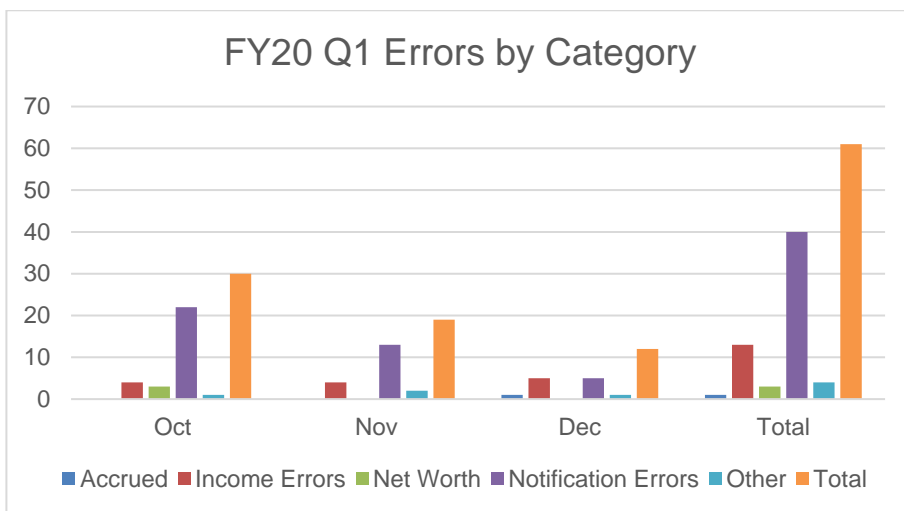
Error Category	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Error Rate
Accrued	0	0	1	1	1.64%
Income Errors	4	4	5	13	21.31%
Net Worth	3	0	0	3	4.92%
Notification Errors	22	13	5	40	65.57%
Other	1	2	1	4	6.56%
Total	30	19	12	61	

As shown in the chart above, the Notification error category is, and continues to be, the category with the highest percentage of errors. However, there is a downward trend in the Notification error category. The percentage of errors in the Notification error category went from 42.31% in October 2019 to 9.62% in December 2019. See chart immediately below for more details on the Notification error category.

Notification Error Category	October	November	December
Number of Errors Cited	22	13	5
Error % within the Notification Error Category	42.31%	25.00%	9.62%

The Income error category had the second highest percentage of errors. The Accrued and Net Worth error categories had a small percentage of errors. The category entitled "Other" had a variety of errors all differing with no correlation between each other.

The chart on the following page provides a quick view of the FY20 Q1 errors by category.



Overall, the analysis showed a decline in errors from the start of the FY20 through the end of Q1 FY20. In FY20 Q1, there was a total of 186 claims reviewed for National STAR Quality, 42 of those claims had errors; which gives an error percentage rate of 22.58%. Of the 42 claims, 61 errors was cited.

Note: Each claim can have more than one error cited against it.

References/Contacts

- ✓ STAR Reports https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/star/reports/star_rpts20.htm

Agenda item: Penalty Period Calculator

Presenter: Angie Smith, Analyst

Target Audience:

All Claims Processors and Management

Discussion:

During the November Quality Call, St. Paul posed the question regarding updating the Net Worth and Penalty Period calculator for the 12-01-19 COLA.

As mentioned in the final November bulletin, an updated version of the Penalty Period calculator is now available on the P&F Service Intranet site for use by all claims processors. Please also refer to M21-1 Part V, Subpart III, Chapter 1, Section J.

References/Contacts

- ✓ P&F Intranet Site <https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/PENSIONANDFIDUCIARY/pension/index.asp>
- ✓ M21-1 V.iii.1.J [Net Worth, Asset Transfers, and Penalty Periods](#)

Agenda item: Blue Water Navy Review

Presenter: Dan Joyce, Analyst

Target Audience:

PMCs and Management

Discussion:

The St. Paul PMC has been selected as one of the Centralized Processing Teams for Blue Water Navy claims. To ensure the centralized processing teams follow proper procedural guidelines when reviewing Blue Water Navy (BWN) claims, the Pension and Fiduciary (P&F) Service's Quality and Oversight staff conducted a review of the first 10 completed BWN claims.

Findings

P&F Service noted that 6 of the 10 cases reviewed require corrective action, however, no errors were cited for the actual BWN decisions. It was additionally noted that guidance clarification on the usage of the BWN Corporate flash is needed, which P&F Service is actively working on.

References/Contacts

- ✓ USB Policy Letter dated September 4, 2019
- ✓ BWN Centralized Processing and Records Research Team SOPs
- ✓ BWN Exposure Memo
- ✓ BWN and Vietnam Veteran's Act of 2019 FAQs
- ✓ M21-1 IV.ii.2.C

[SC for Disabilities Resulting from Exposure to Environmental Hazards or Service in RVN](#)

Agenda item: RVSR Deferrals

Presenter: Dave Coyle, Analyst

Target Audience:

RVSRs, QRT, and Management

Discussion:

As a reminder, new deferral functionality was added to VBMS on November 12, 2019. For exam deferrals, PMCs were instructed to use "Needs Exam (Pension Claim) for any exams or opinions needed on PMC claims.

Please see the table below for a breakdown of PMC Exam Deferrals since November 12, 2019. To ensure the most accurate deferral reporting, please ensure that RVSRs are using the appropriate exam deferral reason.

PMC Exam Deferrals since 11-12-19				
	Total # of Deferrals			
Month of Deferral	Nov 2019	Dec 2019	Jan 2020	Deferral Result
Needs Exam	46	83	34	Avoidable
Needs Exam (Pension Claim)	28	57	16	Unavoidable

References/Contacts

- ✓ [VBMS Deferrals Report](#)
- ✓ VBMS Deferrals Job Aid

Sent to PMCs November 8, 2019

Agenda item: Blue Water Navy Clarification

Presenter: Dave Coyle, Analyst

Target Audience:

PMCs and Management

Discussion:

In response to the solicitation email of January 6, 2020, Philadelphia raised a question on BWN claims where the Veteran's RVN service was conceded during his/her lifetime. The table found in M21-1 IV.ii.1.H.1.b does not give any exceptions for survivor cases.

P&F Procedures Team reviewed this inquiry and states that while [M21-1 IV.ii.1.H.1.b](#) does not specifically mention survivor claims, a similar premise applies. If service connection was granted for a condition by reason of conceded exposure for in-country RVN, Thailand, or Korean DMZ service, the DIC claim should remain at the PMC as exposure has already been conceded. However, if exposure was conceded on other merits, such as nautical service, the claim may be forwarded to the centralized processing PMC.

Agenda item: Paying SC Burial based on DIC

Presenter: Dave Coyle, Analyst

Target Audience:

PMCs and Management

Discussion:

In response to the solicitation email of January 6, 2020, both St. Paul and Milwaukee submitted procedural questions based on the burial change of January 2, 2020 in which SC burial should be paid to a surviving spouse upon the grant of DIC benefits.

P&F Procedures Team reviewed this inquiry and provided answers to all questions. The complete P&F responses will be sent as a separate attachment. Some of the highlights include:

- Established by claims processor granting DIC with note in VBMS
- DOC will be date of 534/534EZ
- Plot should be denied
- Transportation is dependent on information available
- ADL is sufficient
- Surviving spouses only
- Subject to local and national quality errors (note grace period)

Additional questions should be forwarded to the Policy and Procedures mailbox.

References/Contacts

- ✓ M21-1 VII.1.B.2 [SC Burial Allowance](#)
- ✓ P&F Policy/Procedures mailbox PFPOLPROC.VBACO@va.gov

Closing Comments

P&F Quality Mailbox:

We will solicit for agenda topic(s) for each future Quality Call. If you have a specific topic suggestion, please feel free to email it to the Pension and Fiduciary (P&F) Service Quality, Training, and Oversight mailbox at PFTNGQUALOVRST.VBACO@va.gov

Quality Call Bulletins

Quality Call Bulletins can be found in the following location:
https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/PENSIONANDFIDUCIARY/Quality_Call_Bulletins.asp

The next Quality Call is tentatively scheduled for early March, prior to the St. Paul PMC site visit conducted by P&F Service.

TMS Courses:

As mentioned in the November 2019 Quality Call, all Pension Quality Calls and bulletins will be available in TMS. Once the monthly bulletin is finalized, information will be sent to the PMCs which will include the TMS #.

Post-Call Follow Up

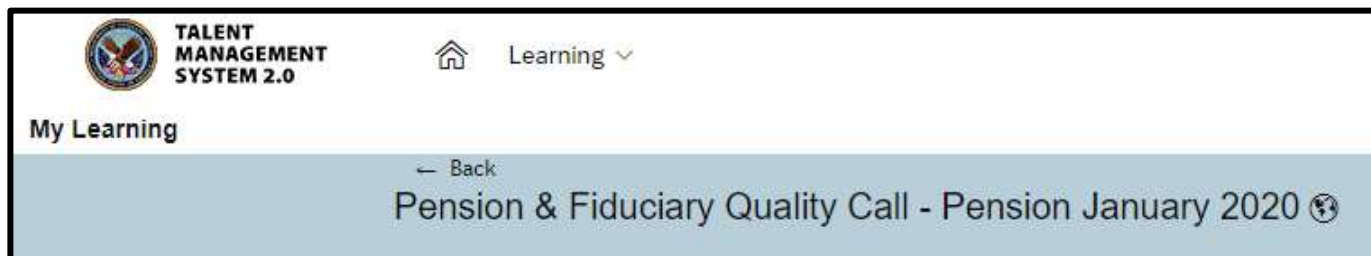
Quality Call Recording:

A recording of the January 2020 Pension Quality Call can be found here (open in Chrome):
<https://vbatraining.adobeconnect.com/p99nmtbufwie/>

TMS Course:

Available content from the Quality Call (bulletin, recording, etc.) will be available in TMS! The TMS # for the January 2020 Pension Quality Call is **4551006** (Pension and Fiduciary Quality Call – Pension January 2020)

The link to TMS is [HERE](#). It is recommended to use Google Chrome when viewing the TMS information.



Q&A:

Question 1: STP PMC

Will there be an extension on the grace period for any of the SC burial updates?

P&F Response:

On a national level, there will be no extension of the grace period for STAR reviews. Manual updates published January 2, 2020, provided information regarding SC burial processing. Locally, the PMCs may make a unified decision on whether to extend the grace period. It is recommended that the grace period not be extended.

Question 2: STP PMC

When is the SC burial document coming from P&F Service?

P&F Response:

The SC burial document Q&A is attached to the final January 2020 Quality call bulletin. Additional questions may be forwarded to the P&F [Policy and Procedures](#) mailbox.

Solicitation Q&A:

Questions 1 and 2: MKE and STP PMC

A number of procedural questions related to the new SC burial procedures was submitted by the Milwaukee and St. Paul PMC.

P&F Response:

The SC burial document Q&A is attached to the final January 2020 Quality call bulletin. In addition, “common” answers were addressed during the quality call. Additional questions may be forwarded to the P&F [Policy and Procedures](#) mailbox.

Question 3: MKE PMC

Milwaukee requested additional clarification on in-home care expenses.

P&F Response:

Updates to [M21-1 V.iii.1.H](#) (Deductible Medical Expenses) were published on December 16, 2019, and January 16, 2020 for in-home care expenses. Clarification was provided on the information required on VA Form 21P-8416 for expenses related to an in-home attendant. In addition, hourly rates of in-home care that exceed \$35 require verification and documentation. Documentation and verification is still required on in-home attendant fees when first claimed or if the fees do not appear to be commensurate with the number of hours that the provider attends to the disabled person. If proper documentation is of record, allow the expense.

Question 4: STP PMC

St. Paul requested additional clarification on due process letters and the requirement to list calculations when the issue of reduction is related to Medicaid or Hospital reductions.

P&F Response:

P&F provided clarification via email of January 16, 2020. VA regulations do not require that notices of proposed adverse action necessarily list all income, medical expenses, and associated calculations. Due process may include this greater level of detail and it is highly recommended this information be provided in notices of adverse action which are related to income and expense changes. Manual updates were published to [M21-1 I.2.B.2.b](#) on January 15, 2020 to clarify the response. “Detailed reasons for the proposed reduction” and “facts and reasons” continue to be required to inform the beneficiary of why the action is being proposed. Additional questions may be sent to the [Policy and Procedures](#) mailbox.

See you soon!

