Monthly Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) and

Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES)

Conference Call Read Ahead

Compensation Service

BDD/IDES/Mil Pay Staff (212A)

July 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.

**Change to Call Notes:** The Call Notes from the previous month’s call will be an appendix to the current month’s Read Ahead (there is no longer a separate Call Notes document). The Call Notes for the June Call will be provided at a later date. The TMS # for this month’s call will be provided during the call and should be active with-in a week of the call’s completion. A Calendar Blast will notify the field when the TMS # is active.

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 Information and New Guidance**

**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#.

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 unmutes the audience for questions, follow the guidance below to unmute yourself:

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.

COVID-19 Topics for Discussion

**COVID-19**

This is a very difficult time, things are very fluid, and some changes/decisions are happening as we speak. We appreciate your patience, flexibility and support. Contact the BDD Mailbox or IDES Mailbox as needed.

Exam Resumption by QTC/VES and the Limitations

Information about QTC/VES resuming exams at certain locations has been distributed, but not all exams are being scheduled/conducted at this time. Any in-person exam that requires the removal of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) is not being scheduled/conducted until further notice. Once the PPE restriction is lifted, those exams will be scheduled/completed.

The Medical Disability Exam (MDE) Program Integration Office (PIO) has established three Phases in which the contractors are conducting in-person exams.

All open areas are in Phase 1

* Phase 1 – Out-patient C&P examinations can be completed that do not require the removal of PPE.
* Phase 2 – Out-patient and in-patient C&P examinations can be completed that do not require the removal of PPE
* Phase 3 – All C&P examinations can be completed

Please keep in mind that this information is subject to change since MDE PIO is following CDC and State/Local guidelines to ensure the safety of the Service members and the staff conducting in-person exams.

<https://benefits.va.gov/compensation/claimexam.asp> can be used to track if exams have resumed in an area. Enter the zip code and it provides a status of that location.

Reminder: All BDD/IDES exams are still to be ordered through QTC/VES. VHA will not be used. This guidance has not changed.

General Topics for Discussion

New Vendor for Scanning of Claims Folders

The Office of Field Operations (OFO) sent an email on June 10, 2020 with “Subject: Claims Folder Shipping Guidance” providing information on a new scanning vendor. All claims folders will now be shipped to:

Exela Technologies

C/O Clarissa Hubbard

30 Industrial Park Rd

Mt. Vernon, KY 40456

This address replaces:

Data Dimension

C/O Kathy Miller

432 Midland Road, Mail Stop 195601

Janesville, WI 53546

Additional training will be scheduled for all impacted business lines at a later date, as users will be transitioning to a new shipping portal.

Requesting Examinations for Pregnant Participants

Compensation Service has been notified that the VBA contract with exam providers does not preclude examining pregnant Service members (SM). MSCs must continue to include the following remarks in any examination request for a pregnant IDES SMs: “Please be advised that this individual has indicated that she is currently pregnant. If the examining physician determines that the examination (or any part of the examination) is medically contraindicated, please clearly indicate which parts of the examination were not completed due to the pregnancy. Further, the examiner should indicate the earliest point (in days following delivery) that the examination may be safely completed. [M21-1 III.i.2. F.3.b](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046277/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-F---Special-Situations-Related-to-the-Integrated-Disability-Evaluation-System-%28IDES%29) will be updated to reflect this change”.

IDES Specific Topics

**Virtual Military Services Coordinator (MSC) Training August 2020**

Compensation Service Staff is planning to conduct the training virtually and we will advise with all the details as soon as additional information becomes available.

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 June 2020.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage/Phase** | **IDES Goal (AD/NAD)** | **June 2020 (AD/NAD)** |
| **Claim Dev**  | **5/11** | **12/11** |
| **Medical Stage** | **32** | **87/63** |
| **Proposed Ratings** | **20** | **14/31** |
| **Recon Ratings**  | **4** | **6/8** |
| **Exit Interviews** | **14** | **9/9** |
| **Final Ratings** | **20/na** | **22/na** |

 **Source:** VTA Completed Reports (Days to Complete Including Deferment) July 6, 2020 (8am ET).

 **Note:** VA using the goals from the 230-day process.

**VTA Specific Topics**

VTA v.2.4.8

VTA v.2.4.8 was released on July 8, 2020. Release info is attached to this call and also in [Folder 6](https://vta.va.gov/VTA/secured/DES/View/Home.aspx#fileSection) of the IDES Program Knowledge Center. The change to be emphasized is the addition of the “DD214 in VBMS” data field on the MSC and DRAS Tabs. MSCs or DRAS will check the box if/when they upload a DD214 to VBMS.

BDD Specific Topics

**Pre-Discharge Corporate Mailbox**

The Pre-Discharge (BDD) corporate mailbox is generally reserved for internal use by field employees. Employees are encouraged to ask questions about Pre-Discharge claim processing and/or bring forth issues impacting the process. Do not provide this email address to external stakeholders. If external stakeholders need assistance from VBA, please direct them to your immediate supervisor to determine if VACO assistance is needed. If so, a specific VACO point of contact will be appointed to assist them.

**Tracked Item for Service Verification**

We’ve received several inquiries about BDD claim processors adding a tracked item in VBMS for service verification prior to the projected discharge date. Verification of service for BDD SMs will occur after their projected separation date has passed. BDD claims processors should not create a tracked item for service verification as this could negatively impact routing and delay processing.

BDD Partial In-Service Ratings

OFO released guidance on July 8, 2020 from the Office of Pre-Discharge and Interagency Collaboration on [BDD Partial In-Service Ratings](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBADOD/docs/predischarge/BDDPartialRatingsFinal.pdf), which is located under, “Pre-Discharge Links and Tools” on the [Pre-Discharge intranet site](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/predischarge.asp).

Effective July 8, 2020, in an effort to ensure claims processors have work available and are maximizing efficiency, Compensation Service is providing the following thresholds regarding the allowance of partial BDD Rating decisions where issues may be deferred in the rating decision. The following thresholds must be met to complete a partial BDD rating decision:

* The partial rating decision must be compensable granting at least a combined rating of 10 percent or more or granting special monthly compensation (SMC), **and**
* If the ready for decision (RFD) BDD claim is routed with 29 or less days remaining on active duty, a partial compensable rating may be done.

Providing a partial rating decision which includes a monetary benefit as soon as possible following separation is good customer service to the Veteran. VA’s objective is to provide benefits and advise of eligible services as early as possible for transitioning SMs. This program modification not only provides the new Veteran with financial benefit during the transition into civilian life, it opens the door for medical treatment and continuity of care.

VBA contract exam vendors have 30 days to complete a new examination. The threshold of 29-days or less was selected as routing prior to this time allows sufficient time for exam clarification prior to discharge. Therefore, a partial rating should not be done on BDD claims with 30 or more days left on active duty since the required exam/exam clarification could be completed prior to discharge.

Only the below deferral reasons should be used for partial BDD ratings.

Primary deferral reason:

* Issue - missed issue and inferred issue
* Exam – needs exam, opinion needed, insufficient exam, and clarification needed

Note: The deferral reasons of Issue - missed issue and inferred issue and exam - needs exam, etc. should not be used in a situation where the claimant failed to report for exams, or the exams were canceled due to scheduling issues. These should only be used if an issue was missed on the exam request or the exam results, a medical opinion is needed, the exam was insufficient, or an exam clarification is needed.

**Separation Health Assessment (SHA) or General Medical Exam**

Per [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.F.4.c](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000053562/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-iv%2C-Chapter-3%2C-Section-F---Examinations-in-Special-Situations), effective October 2013, all eligible BDD claimants receive an SHA in lieu of a general medical examination. However, those SMs who file pre-separation claims that are excluded from the BDD program will continue to require a general medical examination and should not be examined under the SHA protocol. Therefore, if the SM meets the requirements of the BDD claim and the claim is submitted 180-90 days before discharge, then request a SHA. The SM will not be penalized nor removed from the BDD program due to COVID delays.

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 July 7, 2020.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Data Points** | **Goal** | **July 7, 2020** |
| **Completed FYTD** |  | **22,852** |
| **Receipts FYTD** |  | **23,740** |
| **Pending** |  | **5,668** |
| **# Completed w/in 30 Days of Discharge** |  | **14,928** |
| **% Completed w/in 30 Days of Discharge** | **100%** | **65.3%** |
| **Avg. Days to Complete FYTD** | **30** | **40.2** |

**Source:** Tableau BDD History Report, July 8, 2020

Upcoming Teleconferences

The next BDD/IDES Call is scheduled for Tuesday, August 11, 2020, at 2PM ET (subject to change due to the MSC Virtual Training). Please submit IDES questions and proposed topics for discussion to the IDES Mailbox, and BDD questions and proposed topics for discussion to the BDD Mailbox no later than close of business (COB), Wednesday July 29, 2020.

The next BDD/IDES Coaches Call is scheduled for September 3, 2020. Please submit IDES questions and proposed topics for discussion to the IDES Mailbox, and BDD questions and proposed topics for discussion to the BDD Mailbox no later than COB, Monday August 17, 2020.

Open Floor