Compensation Service Pre-Discharge staff host this call to announce updates, address issues, and field questions related to Pre-Discharge Programs (BDD/IDES). All Military Services Coordinators (MSCs), Disability Rating Activity Sites (DRAS), Regional Offices and other VA personnel supporting Pre-Discharge Programs are invited to participate.

This Read-Ahead (R/A) is provided to facilitate discussion during the conference call.

Call Notes for the May 2022 Call are in Appendix 1. The TMS # for this month’s call will be provided during the call and will be active within a week of the call’s completion. A Calendar Blast will notify the field when the TMS # is active.

**Call-in Information**

Microsoft Teams meeting

[Click here to join the meeting](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3Ameeting_MGQ3YzU1N2EtMWJiOC00NzA4LWJmYmYtYTc3ZjhlYjFmNWY5%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e95f1b23-abaf-45ee-821d-b7ab251ab3bf%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22a0338b5c-0526-4e13-9809-5d0ecc8cdeb8%22%7d)

+1 872-701-0185: 63193284#

The R/A and slides will be attached to the Teams Chat. They are also located on the [BDD](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/predischarge.asp) and [IDES](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/IDES.asp) Homepages.

Note: The slides will not be available on the homepages until about noon of call day.

Remember to mute your microphone and turn off your camera.

To ask a question after the call begins, please raise your hand or type it in the Teams Chat—do not unmute to make comments or respond to questions.

Raise your Hand to ask a question over the phone, and you will be called upon for your question/comment. Once your question/comment is addressed, lower your hand (click the hand again). **Please do not talk/blurt out your question/comments unless called upon.** Scenario/Case Specific questions will not be answered on the call. Send an email with details to the appropriate staff email box. Ask questions in reference to the topic(s) being discussed, all other questions should be asked during Open Floor.

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 R/A is available and for notification when the TMS number is active.

General Topic for Discussion

**Military Services Coordinator (MSC) Office Hours**

The below message was distributed to the Districts on June 2, 2022.

*Please ensure this message is disseminated to all stations whose employees process Pre-Discharge Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) and Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) claims.*

*The Pre-Discharge Program Office has established a new Teams Channel to support the launch of its new “Office Hours.” Office Hours are dedicated core hours to prioritize communication with field personnel and other stakeholders through direct engagement and timely responses to issues and concerns.*

*The new channel titled “Pre-Discharge Policy” can be found here:* [*Pre-Discharge Policy Channel*](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com%2Fl%2Fteam%2F19%253apNARbZ1yQ00f3bQk7H8I3jF3IDVgm6JVAIRzRnO4Vh41%2540thread.tacv2%2Fconversations%3FgroupId%3D317c044f-4a44-4adf-a15a-c2324d056012%26tenantId%3De95f1b23-abaf-45ee-821d-b7ab251ab3bf&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cf9dc899e83f642159d2708da44c7c303%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637897921998081716%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=HP1K2sbAwiiktnEA5135%2FEmpUS0%2BmRIisbTU088t%2Bqk%3D&reserved=0) *and will be monitored for questions from MSCs and other field office personnel on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm (EST).*

*MSCs and Public Contact Coaches are encouraged to join the Pre-Discharge Policy channel.*

Due to technical issues, a Teams Chat has been established to replace the above-mentioned Teams Channel and is titled “Pre-Discharge Policy”. We have begun to manually add Coaches, MSCs and others involved in BDD and/or IDES. If you want access contact a BDD or IDES Staff member and we will add you.

This chat is specifically for questions to the BDD or IDES Staff, and MSCs should not respond, comment or answer. When entering a question please state whether your question is BDD or IDES.

MSCs can also send questions to the BDD Mailbox or IDES Mailbox.

Please continue to use the 2022 BDD/IDES Monthly Conference Call Chat for BDD/IDES community talk/questions.

**VES Contact Information**

As mentioned on last month’s call, VES is now a CONUS/OCONUS examiner for Pre-Discharge Claims. Contact VES at 832-333-3611 for assistance or questions. You can also email them at MYVES@vesservices.com if you need access to their portal.

**Changing Exam Vendors in EMS**

As discussed on recent calls, EMS will auto select the exam vendor when exam requests are input. MSCs **SHOULD NOT** manually select another vendor unless VHA is the auto-selected vendor. Please adhere to this guidance. If you have a question/issue/concern contact ContractExam.VBAVACO@va.gov and Cc the BDD Mailbox or IDES Mailbox.

Clarification Request (CR) Language for Gulf War (GW) Examsin Pre-Discharge Cases

On May 25, 2022, the Medical Disability Examination Office met with examination vendors to discuss the Separation Health Assessment (SHA) when GW language is present. If the Exam Scheduling Request (ESR) has the SHA DBQ selected and GW language in the ESR (not the GW DBQ), the vendors are supposed to accept these. If an ESR with SHA and GW *Specialty Language* is rejected by a vendor, respond with following to the CR:

“Per VA guidance adding GW language to the SHA DBQ is the correct procedure for this examinations request.”

For more information on entering contract examination requests using VBMS and responding to a request for clarification, see [M21-1, Part IV.i.2.A.10](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000180498/M21-1%2C-Part-IV%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-A---Examination-Requests-Overview) and [VBMS Core User Guide](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBMS/Resources_Technical_Information.asp).

**BDD Specific Topics**

Aggravation Medical Opinions (MO)

[M21-1, IV.i.2.A.7.a](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fvaww.vrm.km.va.gov%2Fsystem%2Ftemplates%2Fselfservice%2Fva_kanew%2Fhelp%2Fagent%2Flocale%2Fen-US%2Fportal%2F554400000001034%2Fcontent%2F554400000180498%2FM21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-A-Examination-Requests-Overview%237&data=05%7C01%7C%7C2576c4e992384c285d4608da3811ac04%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637883945791178382%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Bv0mx5y1nTzDq3PMov44qcOrv%2FC26tZvD20vEHCkhKg%3D&reserved=0) has been updated, as shown below, effective as of May 31, 2022. MSCs who have completed medical opinion training can now request aggravation medical opinions for BDD and BDD-excluded claims in addition to IDES referrals. This information is also posted on the [BDD](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/predischarge.asp) and [IDES](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/IDES.asp) Intranet pages.

We are currently reviewing the aggravation medical opinion training and if there are any updates to the BDD Quality Review (QR) checklist, we will post all updates on the IDES and BDD Intranet pages and Pre-Discharge Microsoft (MS) Teams chats.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [**IV.i.2.A.7.a.**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fvaww.vrm.km.va.gov%2Fsystem%2Ftemplates%2Fselfservice%2Fva_kanew%2Fhelp%2Fagent%2Flocale%2Fen-US%2Fportal%2F554400000001034%2Fcontent%2F554400000180498%2FM21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-A-Examination-Requests-Overview%237&data=05%7C01%7C%7C2576c4e992384c285d4608da3811ac04%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637883945791178382%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Bv0mx5y1nTzDq3PMov44qcOrv%2FC26tZvD20vEHCkhKg%3D&reserved=0)**Who May Request a Medical Opinion** |  | Development activity personnel and MSCs who have completed training specified by CO are authorized to prepare basic or straightforward medical opinion requests without rating activity review.***Exception***: [M21-1, Part X, Subpart i, 6.F.2.g](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000177955/M21-1%2C-Part-X%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-6%2C-Section-F---Integrated-Disability-Evaluation-System-%28IDES%29-Development-and-Examinations), authorizes MSCs to independently prepare MO requests regarding in-service aggravation of pre-service disabilities as they pertain to IDES, BDD and BDD-excluded claims. If, however, MSCs recognize the need for other “complex” MO types described above, they must refer them for review in accordance with guidance found in  [M21-1, Part X, Subpart i, 6.F.2.h](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000177955/M21-1%2C-Part-X%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-6%2C-Section-F---Integrated-Disability-Evaluation-System-%28IDES%29-Development-and-Examinations). |

Acceptable Clinical Evidence (ACE) Exams

Reminder that ACE may be used to complete exams except for the below categories of exams as shown in [M21-1, IV.i.2.A.4.b](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000180498/M21-1%2C-Part-IV%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-A---Examination-Requests-Overview#4b).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [IV.i.2.A.4.b.](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000180498/M21-1%2C-Part-IV%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-A---Examination-Requests-Overview#4b) Categories of Examinations for Which the ACE Process Is Prohibited |  | The ACE Process is not available in the following categories of examinations:* exams when necessary electronic medical records are not available for examiner review
* SHAs in support of IDES and BDD claims
* general medical examinations
* initial and review traumatic brain injury (TBI) examinations, and
* mental disorder examinations.

**Exceptions**:  The ACE Process may be used to* resolve requests for clarification of, or addendum to, an SHA where the service member’s previous General Medical – Separation Health Assessment Disability Benefits Questionnaire was completed in person, or
* complete individual specialty and/or specialist DBQs for pre-discharge contentions, provided the
	+ service member’s General Medical – Separation Health Assessment Disability Benefits Questionnaire was completed in person, and
	+ other exclusion principles discussed in this block are not applicable.
 |

**Current BDD Program Timeliness**

As VA’s frontline contact with SMs and Veterans, it is vital that we are transparent in our communications regarding claims processing times. Below is the current program timeliness data:

|  |
| --- |
| **BDD Timeliness Data** |
| **Data Points** | **Goal** | **FYTD** |
| **Receipts** |  | **30,679** |
| **Pending** |  | **10,499** |
| **Completed** |  | **26,370** |
| **# Completed w/in 30 Days of Discharge** |  | **12,108** |
| **% Completed w/in 30 Days of Discharge** | **100%** | **45.9%** |
| **Avg. Days to Complete FYTD** | **30** | **68.9** |

***Source:*** *Tableau BDD History Report, June 8, 2022*

IDES Specific Topics

**HAIMS/VBMS/STR/DBQ Update**

The Pre-Discharge Staff, in coordination with DoD, continues to track the HAIMS/VBMS/STRS/DBQ procedures.

* Works with VBMS, DAS and HAIMS to resolve any challenges identified
	+ Duplicate DBQs that appear as STR in the VBMS eFolder
* MSCs/Coaches should run the Pending CEST Report daily. If Military Treatment Facilities (MTF) are having issues with uploading or not aware of the HAIMS/VBMS/DBQ transfer process, send details including VTA Case ID (if applicable) to the IDES Mailbox
* The *HAIMS to VBMS STRs/DBQs Transfer Training Slides* on the [IDES Homepage](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/IDES.asp) have been updated with new M21-1 references

Military Health System (MHS) GENESIS and Health Artifact and Image Management Solutions (HAIMS) Service Treatment Record (STR) Transfer

MHS GENESIS is a DoD inpatient/outpatient Electronic Health Record (EHR) that will replace select DoD legacy healthcare systems. Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officers (PEBLOs) are still responsible for uploading STRs into HAIMS for transfer to Veterans Business Management System (VBMS). In order for documents to flow from HAIMS to VBMS, PEBLOs must use the proper document type below when uploading files.

* Administrative‐STR MHS Genesis (only required if MTF is using MHS Genesis)
* Administrative‐STR AHLTA.pdf (required document)
* Summary‐Medical Board (used for any paper documents not already in HAIMS)
* Administrative‐Pre‐Separation Record Statement (VA Form-0819,required document; upload last)

If there are any questions, comments are concerns regarding the HAIMS/VBMS/DBQ transfer process, send details including VTA Case ID (if applicable) to the IDES Mailbox

**MSCs Tracking Exams and Updating Systems**

MSCs are reminded of the requirement and importance of tracking the completion of exams, adding the Transfer from Intake Site Special Issue, which will result in the claim being transferred to DRAS via automated National Work Queue (NWQ) routing (Jan 2022 Read Ahead) and updating VTA (SHA Exam Returned Date, Exam End Date, Medical Evaluation End Date and Transferred to DRAS Date) in order to close exams and move the case along. We have found over 300 cases where the exams are complete/in VBMS, but data fields are not updated. Moving forward we will be reaching out to ROs to correct issues.

Note: The Jan 2022 Call, Appendix 2 has the instructions for MSCs to follow. All the actions in Steps 5-12 should be completed together, but no later than same day.

**MSC/SM Interview Information about Cases that are Return to Duty (RTD)**

Over the last month we have had several cases where a SM was disenrolled and RTD (2 COAD and 1 Unfit, but RTD). In each case the SM and PEBLO thought the case would be re-enrolled when the SM reached their discharge date and would receive an IDES Final Rating, which is in-correct. In one case the Exit Interview was not completed nor was the RTD Letter sent, which added to the SMs confusion. This brings to point the importance of running your Pending Exit Interview Report.

We are asking MSCs mention to the SM during the MSC/SM Interview that a SM will not receive an IDES rating unless they are disenrolled for PDRL, TDRL, or Separated with Benefits. If they are disenrolled for other reasons they will need to file a BDD Claim if within the window or a traditional claim if they are not within 180-90 days of discharge. Currently the Deferment option in VTA is only for 12 months or less. We have requested DoD change the 12-month rule and defer all COAD cases so the case is not disenrolled and the SM will receive an IDES Final Rating.

Note: Suggest reminding your PEBLO Supervisor/PEBLOs.

**DRAS Reminder about Proposed Rating Data in VTA**

DRAS’ are reminded that a Proposed Rating Start and End Date should not be entered into VTA until a Proposed Rating Request Date is entered by the PEB. A Proposed Rating Completed on Date prior to the entry of a Proposed Rating Request Date can be entered per IDES Parallel Processing rules.

**Requesting Assistance with Delayed/Problem Cases**

MSCs are reminded that case issues/delays should be addressed ASAP. If you are not receiving support from your MTF/others, contact your Coach. If still no resolution, contact the IDES Mailbox.

**Ex1:** MSC sent several emails to the PEBLO about a disenrollment request, the PEBLO did not reply and MSC stopped following up. Three months later, the case was still lingering with no action/resolution.

**Ex2:** RO had a sensitive case and needed the sister station to work it. The RO delayed coordination for 6 days after Prepare Claim Start Date was entered, which already put Claim Development time over goal for the sister station.

Current IDES Program Timeliness

As outreach specialists and VA’s frontline contact with SMs and Veterans, it is vital that we are transparent in our communications regarding claims processing times. Below is the current program timeliness data:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage/Phase** | **IDES Goal (AD/NAD)** | **May 2022 (AD/NAD)** |
| **Claim Dev**  | **5/11** | **7/8** |
| **Medical Stage** | **32** | **51/45** |
| **Proposed Ratings** | **20** | **12/23** |
| **Recon Ratings**  | **4** | **8/11** |
| **Exit Interviews** | **14** | **8/14** |
| **Final Ratings** | **30/na** | **24/na** |

 ***Source:*** *VTA Completed Reports (Days to Complete Including Deferment) June 1, 2022 (7:45 ET).*

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

VTA Specific Topics

**VTA v.2.4.15**

VTA v.2.4.15 will be released Wednesday night June 15th. The list of updates will be in Folder 6 of the [VTA Knowledge Center.](https://vta.va.gov/VTA/secured/DES/View/Home.aspx#fileSection)

**Disenrollment Actions are a DoD Responsibility**

This is a reminder to all that PEBLOs or PEBs are the only VTA users that can request disenrollment or re-enrollment of a case in VTA. After the request is submitted, final approval/disapproval is in the hands of DES Operations at the Defense Health Agency (osd.pentagon.ousd-p-r.mbx.ides@mail.mil). The VA or the VTA Help Desk are not involved with disenrollment actions.

Please keep this in mind if you receive any question in regard to disenrollment or re-enrollment assistance.

Contact the IDES Mailbox, Michelle Collins or Andy Reese if needed.

Upcoming Conference Calls

The next BDD/IDES Call is scheduled for Tuesday, July 12, 2022, 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 BDD Mailbox no later than close of business (COB), Friday, June 24, 2022.

Open Floor

**Appendix 1: Call Notes from the May 2022 BDD/IDES Conference Call**

**Required Use of New Vendors for Pre-Discharge Examinations**

**Question: QTC has reports on their portal and we use this to send weekly exam info to PEBLOS. Will VES have similar reports?**

**Answer:** No, currently, there is no reporting capability in the VES portal.

**HAIMS/VBMS/STR/DBQ Update**

**Question: I have been having an issue with identifying my Military Treatment Facility (MTF) on the Pending CEST reports?**

**Answer:** We reviewed a few cases and determined a few locations will need the referring MTF along with the MEB MTF included in the report. A VTA enhancement is being worked to update this report (date TBD).

MSCs are encouraged to remind PEBLOs to select the correct referring MTF when preparing IDES referrals in VTA.

**Question: Do we need to update the contentions in VBMS to show them as referred?**

**Answer:** Yes, if you are prompted by VBMS to indicate which contentions are considered referred, MSC should update.

**Current IDES Program Timeliness**

**Question: Are there plans to adjust the Stage goals for IDES?**

**Answer:** There are no immediate changes planned. However, VA and DoD are currently in discussions regarding potential changes to stage goals in consideration of current performance.

**Question: Would it be possible to exclude weekends?**

**Answer:** No, all IDES program performance goals are measured in calendar days; No change to how days are counted is expected.

**Open Floor**

**Question: Will the BDD section of the manual be updated to simplify procedures?**

**Answer:** The Pre-Discharge staff continues to work on updating policy and procedures in the M21 for the BDD and IDES programs. Once updates have been completed in the manual, MSCs will be notified during a BDD/IDES Conference Call.

**Question: Why can’t MSCs who process BDD claims request medical opinions, but MSCs who process IDES claims can request medical opinions?**

**Answer:**

**BDD and BDD-excluded Aggravation Medical Opinions Update:**

[M21-1, IV.i.2.A.7.a](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fvaww.vrm.km.va.gov%2Fsystem%2Ftemplates%2Fselfservice%2Fva_kanew%2Fhelp%2Fagent%2Flocale%2Fen-US%2Fportal%2F554400000001034%2Fcontent%2F554400000180498%2FM21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-A-Examination-Requests-Overview%237&data=05%7C01%7C%7C7aa5a21b0b50479c3a2808da4567c9d9%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637898609311649159%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=GjkIYXGhXUoWVatZeMSRJptFLE35wVo5a5gDLHVPVHU%3D&reserved=0) has been updated. MSCs who have completed medical opinion training can now request aggravation medical opinions for BDD and BDD-excluded claims in addition to IDES referrals.

This information has been posted on the [BDD](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/predischarge.asp) and [IDES](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/IDES.asp) Intranet pages. The Pre-Discharge staff is reviewing the aggravation medical opinion training and the BDD Quality Review (QR) checklist. If there are changes made, they will be posted on the Intranet sites and the Pre-Discharge MS Teams chats.

**Question: Can someone address VES OCONUS delays?**

**Answer:** MDEO Analyst response; MDEO is working with VES to address OCONUS delays. The Pre-Discharge staff is aware of the concerns and working with MDEO to resolve the delays.

**Question: Will Fast Letters be re-invented?**

**Answer:** The Pre-Discharge staff is not aware of any plans to return to using Fast Letter for updates to manual.

**Question: If I receive an exam clarification, should the clarification response stay with the same vendor or go to a new vendor?**

**Answer:** The clarification response should stay with the same vendor.