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 September 2022 Call are in Appendix 1. The TMS # for this month’s call will be provided during the call and will be active about a week after the call. 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#](tel:+18727010185,,63193284# )

The R/A will be attached to the Teams Chat.

Remember to mute your microphone and turn off your camera.

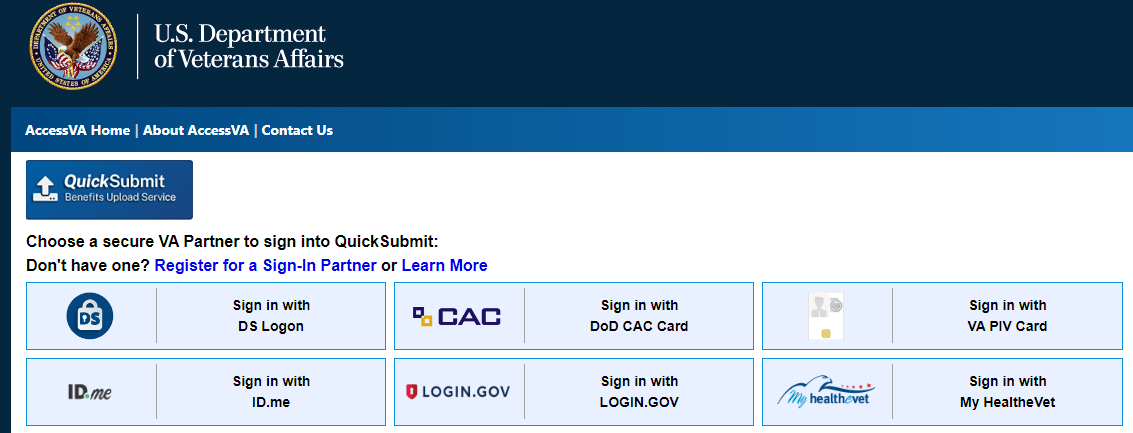
To ask a question after the call begins, please raise your hand (click the hand icon) or type it in the Teams Chat—**do not unmute to ask a question, comment or respond to questions until called upon**. Once your question/comment is addressed, lower your hand (click the hand icon again). Scenario/Case 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

**Office of Business Integration (OBI) QuickSubmit Training**

Do you have customers who experience difficulties in uploading into VA.gov? Do you know they can use QuickSubmit Benefits Upload Service which is the next generation of Direct Upload (see [M21-1, II.i.1.A.3.a.](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000174855/M21-1-Part-II-Subpart-i-Chapter-1-Section-A-Centralized-Mail-CM-Intake?query=%22Direct%20Upload%22#3a)).



If you are interested in getting better informed on QuickSubmit and its capabilities, OBI offers a 30-45 minute block of training **on the 2nd Friday of every month at 2PM ET**. Take this opportunity to learn more about electronic submissions at VBA and get your questions answered real time. Please note, OBI’s TEAMS invite changes monthly so the following is for this October 2022 only:

Microsoft Teams meeting

**Join on your computer, mobile app or room device**

[Click here to join the meeting](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/ap/t-59584e83/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com%2Fl%2Fmeetup-join%2F19%253ameeting_YjE3MmVkOWQtNDU0OC00MDJiLWJlODUtY2Q1ZTJkNmE2YTZj%2540thread.v2%2F0%3Fcontext%3D%257b%2522Tid%2522%253a%2522e95f1b23-abaf-45ee-821d-b7ab251ab3bf%2522%252c%2522Oid%2522%253a%2522c1b0eb0b-599e-404e-ba09-caee212838c0%2522%257d&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd3ca5f7b985f459875c808daa0890cf5%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637998807878793468%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=mHGCwaKHU%2FICkqwC9Vtj6GGoxs3%2FRqYVyBl%2FmFyN6cc%3D&reserved=0)

Meeting ID: 283 155 929 712   
Passcode: bqCDz9

[Download Teams](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.microsoft.com%2Fen-us%2Fmicrosoft-teams%2Fdownload-app&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd3ca5f7b985f459875c808daa0890cf5%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637998807878793468%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=yBHoR0BQeFWt9ix5Mhi2s6LCq7HuADfjOcPgsPrOKdg%3D&reserved=0) | [Join on the web](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.microsoft.com%2Fmicrosoft-teams%2Fjoin-a-meeting&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cd3ca5f7b985f459875c808daa0890cf5%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637998807878793468%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=KZByzQOxd5yp3HpfgigJDpr63xnOZwXTdASJG0zjUJ8%3D&reserved=0)

**Or call in (audio only)**

[+1 872-701-0185,,932355338#](tel:+18727010185,,932355338# )   United States, Chicago

Phone Conference ID: 932 355 338#



**Foreign Exam Country Coverage**

Overseas exam vendors are now covering 39 countries with recent addition of Honduras and Saudi Arabia.



**PACT Act Special Issue**

We are working with the Compensation Service PACT Act Integrated Project Team (IPT), Quality Review and Policy staffs on Pre-Discharge PACT Act guidance. If there are any changes or updates to this guidance, we will send a calendar blast e-mail and post the update in the two MS TEAMS Pre-Discharge chats, *2022 BDD/IDES Monthly Conference Call* and the *Pre-Discharge Policy* Team under “General”.

MSCs are reminded to liberally construe PACT Act related claims if the evidence shows any of the below information:

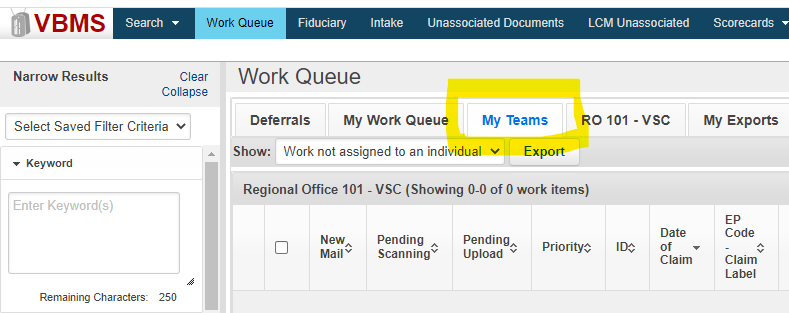
* the Service member (SM)/Veteran states the disability is related to service in a newly-recognized or existing presumptive location.
* the SM/Veteran does not explicitly state what has caused a claimed disability. but there is service in a newly-recognized or existing presumptive location. A claim based on toxic exposure should be assumed unless the claimed conditions are clearly due to other causes, such as trauma (e.g., knee injury, traumatic brain injury (TBI), etc.) or a mental health condition (e.g., posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, etc.).
* the SM/Veteran claims a newly-recognized presumptive disability, **or**
* it is unclear whether it may be related to toxic exposure.

If any of the above criteria are met, add the ***PACT*** special issue to each of the relevant contention(s). Review all claims before changing the claims status to Ready for Decision (RFD), as these claims are subject to quality review. If any of the above criteria are met, add the ***PACT*** special issue to each of the relevant contention(s) before changing the claims status to RFD. If SM has not served in the PACT presumptives locations nor has claimed the condition due to PACT Act, do not enter the ***PACT*** special issue,

Please see the [PACT Act Interim Guidance](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/PACT%20Act%20Interim%20Field%20Guidance%20Memo.pdf) and the *Overview of the PACT Act* TMS Course, VA 4634424, for more information. Current PACT Act information is located here on the [PACT Act Information Page](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/pact.htm). **Questions on the PACT Act should be routed through your RO Leadership to the mailbox at**[**CS\_PACTACT**](mailto:VBANEWCSPACTACT@va.gov)**.**When emailing [**CS\_PACTACT**](mailto:VBANEWCSPACTACT@va.gov), copy/CC either the [VAVBAWAS/CO/PREDISCHARGE](mailto:VAVBAWAS/CO/PREDISCHARGE%20%3cPredischarge.VBACO@va.gov%3e) or [VAVBAWAS/CO/IDES](mailto:VAVBAWAS/CO/IDES%20%3cIDES.VBACO@VA.GOV%3e) mailbox as appropriate.

**VBMS Work Queue and My Teams**

If MSCs are looking for claims that were previously assigned to them, and are still in their Regional Office’s queue, look under the *Work Queue* Tab and select the *My Teams* Tab; see below.



BDD Specific Topics

**Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) including Military Sexual Trauma (MST) BDD Claims Development Requirements**

PTSD claimants including MST that meet the BDD requirements per [M21-1, X.i.6.B.1.a](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000177950/M21-1-Part-X-Subpart-i-Chapter-6-Section-B-Benefits-Delivery-at-Discharge-BDD-and-Initial-Processing#1a) are no longer required to provide a stressful incident/stressor statement(s) in support of their PTSD claim, including VA Form 21-0781 and 21-0781a, when submitting a BDD claim. The Pre-Discharge Program (PDP) Staff is submitting this guidance to be included in the BDD manual in [M21-1, X.i.6.B](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000177950/M21-1-Part-X-Subpart-i-Chapter-6-Section-B-Benefits-Delivery-at-Discharge-BDD-and-Initial-Processing). This guidance will also be published on the [BDD](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/predischarge.asp) and [Compensation Service Interim Guidance Intranet pages](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/rating/guidance.htm).

Request completion of the Initial PTSD Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) if VA has not yet established service-connection (SC). Otherwise request the Review PTSD DBQ.

***Important***: All BDD claimants must have 180 to 90 days remaining on active duty per [M21-1, X.i.6.B.1.a](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000177950/M21-1-Part-X-Subpart-i-Chapter-6-Section-B-Benefits-Delivery-at-Discharge-BDD-and-Initial-Processing#1a). The fact that a VA examination will be conducted while the BDD claimant is still in service will make completion of stressor development forms unnecessary. This is because a diagnosis of PTSD in-service would typically be sufficient to support a grant on a direct basis without stressor verification. When PTSD is diagnosed in service, the service member’s testimony alone may establish that the claimed in-service stressor occurred as provided in [38 CFR 3.304(f)(1)](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=fa147f1fcb9203350440f9242f1b8e27&node=se38.1.3_1304&rgn=div8), and if late onset or delayed PTSD is diagnosed related to a pre-service stressor, there is no statutory or regulatory requirement for credible supporting evidence. Conversely, VA examination results showing no PTSD diagnosis would also make stressor development unnecessary. Therefore, if the BDD PTSD examination is conducted after discharge, a stressful incident/stressor statement(s) is still not required.

***References***: For more information on:

* in-service diagnosis of PTSD based on an in-service stressor or a pre-service stressor, see [M21-1, VIII.iv.1](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/topic/554400000020659/Chapter-01-Posttraumatic-Stress-Disorder-PTSD)
* BDD requirements, see [M21-1, X.i.6.B.1.a](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000177950/M21-1-Part-X-Subpart-i-Chapter-6-Section-B-Benefits-Delivery-at-Discharge-BDD-and-Initial-Processing#1a)

There is no change to the IDES PTSD development guidance in [M21-1, X.i.6.E.4.c](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000177953/M21-1-Part-X-Subpart-i-Chapter-6-Section-E-Integrated-Disability-Evaluation-System-IDES-Referrals-and-Initial-Processing#4c). Stressor statements are only required for non-active duty IDES participants and not required for active duty IDES participants. This PTSD guidance does not apply to BDD-excluded claims. PTSD stressful incident/stressor statement(s) are still required for BDD-excluded claims.

**BDD Entrance Examinations**

[BDD Entrance Examination guidance](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBADOD/docs/IDES/bdd-entrance-exams-interim-guidance.pdf) was recently posted on the [BDD/Pre-Discharge](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/predischarge.asp) and [Compensation Service Interim Guidance](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/rating/guidance.htm) Intranet pages. [M21-1, III.ii.2.A.1.f](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000014117/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-2-Section-A-General-Information-on-Service-Records#1f) was updated and the Pre-Discharge guidance to exclude the claim from the BDD program if entrance examination was not received was removed. Below are the required development actions if service treatment records (STRs) are received without the entrance examination. This guidance will be published in the [M21-1, X.i.6](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/topic/554400000020847/Chapter-06-Pre-Discharge-Claims). We will announce when any M21-1 changes are published.

**Entrance Examination Development Actions**

1. Call the SM to request the entrance examination. If the SM does not answer the phone, leave a message with a return phone number and enter a note in VBMS to document that you left a message.
2. Send an e-mail to the SM requesting the entrance examination, unless already obtained.
3. Do not develop further to the SM for the entrance examination. Do not complete any follow up development and do not wait to request the VA examinations including the Separation Health Assessment (SHA) and all specialty examinations.
4. Request the entrance examination from [DPRIS](https://www.dpris.dod.mil/#/home/home-home), unless already obtained.
5. Enter permanent VBMS notes regarding all completed development actions, indicate if the entrance examination was obtained and proceed with all other development actions.

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
  + Still working to get accomplished-Target Date October 16, 2022.
* 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](mailto:VAVBAWAS/CO/IDES%20%3cIDES.VBACO@VA.GOV%3e)
* 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

**Holiday Leave and SM Availability during the Claims Development and Examination Phases**

As we approach the holidays, MSCs are reminded to inquire about approved leave (non-emergency) during the initial interview that could interfere with the IDES process, specifically exams (this inquiry should be made during every interview, just not during the holidays). If the SM indicates he or she has approved leave that would prevent the timely completion of exams/delay VA processes, the MSC should return the referral to the PEBLO as an improper referral and remove the PCS Date. MSCs should confirm with the PEBLO that they are aware of the upcoming leave and see if something can be worked out (e.g., SM will attend exams while on leave, etc.). Do not accept a case or submit exam requests if you know the SM will not be available to report for exams.

Notes:

1. DoD policy allows commanders to grant leave to IDES SMs for the welfare or morale of the SM, provided that the leave does not prevent timely completion of IDES appointments.

2. Deferment should not be used by PEBLOs as a reason for cases where the SM is going on leave. If you hear of this being done, contact the IDES Mailbox.

3. Cases should not be on the VA clock in these instances.

VTA Reminders

**3rd/4th Cases not Showing on Pending CEST Report When Filtered by VARO**

We have recognized an issue in VTA when a PEBLO adds a 3rd or 4th case. The case will not show on the Pending CEST Report when filtered by VARO, however, it will show when the report is filtered by MTF. If needed, ask your PEBLO to notify you of any 3rd/4th cases so the case is not missed. Andy Reese will also inform the Coach when he sees a 3rd/4th case. We will get the issue fixed ASAP.

Upcoming Conference Calls

The next BDD/IDES Call is scheduled for Tuesday, **November 15, 2022**, at 2PM ET. Please submit IDES questions and proposed topics for discussion to the [IDES Mailbox](mailto:VAVBAWAS/CO/IDES%20%3cIDES.VBACO@VA.GOV%3e), and BDD questions and proposed topics for discussion to the [BDD Mailbox](mailto:VAVBAWAS/CO/PREDISCHARGE%20%3cPredischarge.VBACO@va.gov%3e) no later than close of business (COB), Monday, October 31, 2022

Open Floor

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

**Question**: If we have an active-duty Service member who has never been to the location that is listed in the PACT Act but claiming Allergic-Rhinitis, what do we do with that?

**Answer**: Go through the PACT Act guidance and review but I believe put on the special issue, but I could be wrong about that. Any question related to the PACT Act guidance should be directed via email through station leadership to CS PACT Act mailbox for an answer.

**Question:** If the previous BDD claim was denied within award action because the claimant stayed on active duty, then later claims the same condition, does that fall under this?

**Answer:** We are canceling the end product because the person is staying on active duty.

**Question**: Is there any way we can get written guidance we can use for QRT purposes? Because the QRT in my office says that we would issue 0995 to them.

**Answer**: Go ahead and send it to our mailbox with the claim ID number and we will look into that.

**Question**: Is this needed for Hernia's as it is a digestive issue?

**Answer:** If the Hernia does involve a digestive issue, then you will use the language for sure.

**Question:** Can we get the readahead prior to the training?

**Answer:** We try and get the Read Ahead out before the call.

**Question:** If a claim is already in Providence after I send It RFD, and a month later I get an addendum from the PEBLO saying there are two more new referred conditions, do I take the claim back or do I let Providence upload the documents?

**Answer:** First always check the manual. And if you get a case like this, again send us an email and we will help you with that.

**Question:** The proposed rating decision is delayed at this time in Providence.

**Answer:** Over the last several months, we have received a surge of rating requests from the Navy and Marine Core, and it has resulted in a backlog requesting rating from us. Prior to the surge we were completing most proposed rates before they requested them. We have a backlog now and we are averaging about 20- 25 days on average to complete proposed ratings. If the case has been more than 25 days feel free to reach out and we can expedite them.

**Question:** Our proposed rating decisions, IDES rating decisions are going to be delayed now because of the PACT Act special issue on them and you stated that they won’t even been looked at until January? How will that affect IDES/ BDD and BDD excluded claims?

**Answer:** I don’t believe they are being delayed for BDD. For BDD excluded those are routed after discharge and it shouldn’t affect.

**Question:** LHI has been canceling appointments for SM because of miscommunication and with time difference. But everything is cancelled. When you look at VBMS you see the appointment but when you look at the website portal you get a different time. The SM are saying they are getting conflicting emails. They cancelled all pending appointments, and it is a big problem.

**Answer:** Please send it to our mailbox so we can follow up on that case. We understand there is confusion by LHI and MDEO is going to meet with them to discuss the issues and concerns.

**Question:** The Navy side of the house is slowing down ever since they decided to centralize.

**Answer:** The Navy is aware of this issue, and we are working to address the issue and the Navy is currently doing a Pilot to try and see the claims. We are aware of the issue, and we are working with DoD and Navy on it.

**Question:** Would it be possible to set up a call with DRAS coaches as well as the MSC coaches around the country so when specific updates come out, we can keep each other on the same page instead of waiting for BDD/ IDES monthly call.

**Answer:** I think that is a great idea. We can talk to Leadership.