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 January 2023 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#

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 about 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

**Emails to Pre-Discharge Mailboxes (BDD and IDES) and Subject Lines**

This is a reminder from last month’s call. When sending emails to the Pre-Discharge (BDD and IDES) Mailboxes, please use the below Subject Line format: Program: Issue/reason for email.

Ex: BDD: Exam Delay or IDES: Claim 29 Palms

The body of the email should be specific and contain as much info needed for the staff to understand the issue/question to reply.

We are working the move to one box and will let the field know the start date.

**New Separation Health Assessment (SHA) DBQ Form**

The Medical Disability Examination Office (MDEO) will be implementing the use of a new SHA DBQ on May 1, 2023. Development of this common form to document the health of separating Service members (SMs) has been a long-standing effort between VA and DoD and will reduce duplication of examinations of similar nature in both Departments upon full implementation. One benefit of the new common form SHA is it requires VA Examiners/Vendors to review the medical history prior to the SMs physical examination resulting in a more accurate and complete examination of the separating SM.

The VA will launch the new form for separating SMs filing claims with VA through the BDD or IDES programs. DoD will soon follow. Upon DoD’s approval for Department-wide use, the new form will be known as DD Form 3146. The DD Form 3146 will be a three-part document (Part A, B, and C) that DoD and VA will use to conduct examinations for SMs exiting the military. VA will only utilize Parts A and B, as Part C will be for DOD use only. VA employees may note Part C in the STRs upon full DoD implementation.

Separating SMs will be required to complete Part A, “SM Identification and Self-Assessment” which will replace the current [DD Form 2807-1 “Report of Medical History](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.esd.whs.mil%2FPortals%2F54%2FDocuments%2FDD%2Fforms%2Fdd%2Fdd2807-1.pdf&data=05%7C01%7C%7C4bbb63bb000a42bc4ca608db0b7a327d%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C638116391674638484%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=rLi3L4OlO0vgJcC%2BcSuZPfyNPe9lRkmk2F%2Fyswkykao%3D&reserved=0). All SMs seeking benefit under the BDD, or IDES program will be required to complete this form prior to the SHA examination being requested in VBMS. Claims Processors and MSCs will be responsible for making sure this document is present in the eFolder prior to requesting the SHA examination, as well as being properly identified for the examiner’s review (see [M21-1, IV.i.2.A.8.d.](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov%2Fsystem%2Ftemplates%2Fselfservice%2Fva_ssnew%2Fhelp%2Fcustomer%2Flocale%2Fen-US%2Fportal%2F554400000001018%2Fcontent%2F554400000180498%2FM21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-A-Examination-Requests-Overview%3Fquery%3Dbookmark%238d&data=05%7C01%7C%7C4bbb63bb000a42bc4ca608db0b7a327d%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C638116391674638484%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ObWMEze9zDpWaZCZolDMELqsxMQmUqMSiY9u29m1jo0%3D&reserved=0)). During the transition period to full implementation by both agencies, it will be permissible to substitute the current 2807-1 in the file at the time of SHA examination request.

Part B “Clinical Assessment” will replace the current [DD Form 2808 “Report of Medical Examination”](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.esd.whs.mil%2FPortals%2F54%2FDocuments%2FDD%2Fforms%2Fdd%2Fdd2808.pdf&data=05%7C01%7C%7C4bbb63bb000a42bc4ca608db0b7a327d%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C638116391674638484%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=q55wDBx%2BlBajsnFSkYkraz2waIzXZokXxtgEVT6O%2Bs4%3D&reserved=0) and will be used by VA Examiners/Vendors to record their physical examination findings. Part A will be made available both internally and externally so SMs can download and complete Part A to submit with their claim for benefits.

We are working with MDEO on Manual updates, job aids, and communication to internal/external partners (to include SMs) on the implementation of the new forms as well as with DoD to make sure the PEBLOS are aware of the change and requirement.

**Updated PACT Act Materials**

Last week the Office of Field Operations (OFO), in partnership with Compensation Service (CS), sent out a message about updated PACT Act guidance announcing a number of updated materials posted to the [PACT Act Information Page](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/pact.htm) and effective February 6, 2023, to include:

* [PACT Act Implementation SOP Version 2.0](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/PACT%20Act%20Implementation%20SOP%20%28v.2%29.pdf) (NOTE: this SOP has been determined as an “Internal Deliverative Document - Do Not Release”)
* [PACT Act FAQs Version 2.0](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/PACT%20Act%20FAQs%20Version%202.0.pdf) (Pre-Discharge is clickable listed on the table of contents and FAQs are found on page 25)

Please familiarize yourself with these resources. Reminder:

* Active-duty pre-discharge claims should not be considered under the PACT Act unless the claimed condition is from a prior period of active duty that could be associated with the provisions of the PACT Act. If a pre-discharge claimant has a prior period of qualifying service or is a non-active-duty Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) participant, PACT Act provisions may apply. See page 4 of SOP.
* Toxic Exposure Risk Activity (TERA) procedures do not apply to active-duty pre-discharge claims unless the claim is for a prior period of active duty. If a pre-discharge claimant has a prior period of qualifying service or is a non-active-duty IDES participant, TERA provisions may apply. See pages 11 and 15 of SOP.

Continued usage of the [PACT Act Inquiry Tool](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdvagov.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FVBA21CPACTACT%2FInquiry%2FSitePages%2FPACTActHome.aspx%3FOR%3DTeams-HL%26CT%3D1672845558039%26clickparams%3DeyJBcHBOYW1lIjoiVGVhbXMtRGVza3RvcCIsIkFwcFZlcnNpb24iOiIyNy8yMjExMzAwNDEwMCIsIkhhc0ZlZGVyYXRlZFVzZXIiOmZhbHNlfQ%253d%253d&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cc8cd2cf66f564cdd443f08daee67de2b%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C638084427111647200%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=OjieBEQwlddAoQE%2F1km%2BQ2R87UYl1RkjT4DyH%2FHnN0s%3D&reserved=0) is encouraged. Many of the FAQs stemmed from this tool. Stations are still to utilize and exhaust all local resources (e.g., PACT Act Subject Matter Experts, local Quality Review Team, PACT Act Information Page) prior to using the PACT Act Inquiry Tool. Employees should work with their direct supervisor to submit questions through the PACT Act Inquiry Tool.

**FY23 Virtual MSC Symposium Save the Dates and Training Topics**

The FY23 MSC Training Symposium will be held virtually April 18 – 20, 2023 from 12:30 – 4:00 PM each day. Send any topics you would like covered during the training symposium by close of business (COB) Friday, February 17, 2023 to the IDES and BDD Mailboxes.

BDD Specific Topics

**Release from Active Duty (RAD) in VBMS**

The Pre-Discharge Programs Staff has received approval to allow the Verified field in the military service screen in VBMS to be editable when it is showing, “Verified via VADS” for an unverified period of service. Implementation of this improvement is still pending.

Please use the below workaround provided by Fort Carson when the Verified field is prepopulated with, “Verified via VADS”.

1. Delete all periods of service in SHARE,
2. Add the period(s) of service back into SHARE, leave the Verified field blank and select update,
3. Wait about two to three minutes and VBMS should update, if not, delete the period(s) of service in VBMS
4. Add the period(s) of service back in to VBMS with the future RAD, select, “No” in the Verified field
5. Once the RAD date has passed and service is verified, change the Verified field to, “Yes”

Please note, for all prior periods of service that are verified, enter these periods of service as verified service.



IDES Specific Topics

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

The Pre-Discharge Programs Staff, in coordination with DoD, continues to track the HAIMS/VBMS/STRS/DBQ procedures. Our staff works with VBMS, DAS and HAIMS to resolve any challenges identified. Our staff is tracking two issues below:

1. New mail indicator- The archiving of new documents creates a new mail indicator appear when no new mail exists.

2. Auto-Archiving of STRs that have the same document type and source comment found on duplicate DBQs

Our staff is currently determining the best options to resolve these issues. Our staff will continue to monitor this issue and will provide updates as they become available.

* 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

**MHS Genesis and HAIMS Automation**

PEBLOs remain responsible to upload the complete STR into HAIMS, so that the IDES referral can be transferred to VBMS. If the MTF has transferred to MHS Genesis, PEBLOs **MUST** include all MHS Genesis files, the AWP, and any paper documents not previously scanned, and these files must be uploaded into HAIMS. This guidance was originally released by DHA in January 2021 and became effective February 1, 2021. If PEBLOs continue to push back on this guidance, please send an email to the IDES Mailbox including the MTF as soon as possible.

**Manual Updates**

On January 23, 2023 [M21-1, X.i.6.K.5.a](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000177960/M21-1-Part-X-Subpart-i-Chapter-6-Section-K-Special-Situations-Related-to-Integrated-Disability-Evaluation-System-IDES?query=casualty#5) *Handling Notice That an IDES Participant Has Died* was updated. The title of Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO) was changed to Casualty Assistance Coordinator (CAC). The [Office of Outreach, Transitions and Economic Development (OTED)](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/oted/) is the VA’s proponent for *Survivors of Service members Who Die on Active Duty* and this update aligns to their policy.

Reminder, per [M27-1 II.6](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.benefits.va.gov%2FWARMS%2Fdocs%2Fadmin21%2FM27_1%2FPart_II%2FII-6.pdf&data=05%7C01%7C%7C6f3c4d02b700424f6bb108dafd4df3cd%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C638100808483471349%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=nhcTjTO9wjkPZlWpCfQOAUdZ1E44n3fYEDqG3TCR1QY%3D&reserved=0): ***There should be no attempt to contact any survivor unless 30 days have passed since the death of the service member.*** The military will give direction on when VA contact should be initiated.

For additional Casualty information or assistance, contact your station CAC using OTED’s [Casualty Assistance Coordinators Directory](https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VBABASqualitytraining/bastrain/data/siteassets/coordinator/frame_pages/casframe.aspx).

Failure of an IDES Participant to Report for Examination

We all know that missed exams can cause significant delays to an IDES case. [M21-1, X.i.6.F.3.j.](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) describes the actions MSCs should take when an IDES participant fails to report for an exam without good cause. Good cause can be a fine line. We just ask that MSCs take a good look at the SM reason for missing an exam and maybe make the decision it was not in good cause. Bottom-line: The decision is the MSCs and add any notes needed. Referred and Claimed condition exams will need to be looked at differently per the table. Referred condition exams will most likely need to be re-ordered, however, claimed condition exams have a little more flexibility when it comes to not re-ordering and moving the case along.

**VA Form 21-0819 (DoD Referral to IDES)**

DoD/the Services have not put out guidance to use the September 2022 version of this form, therefore, you should be receiving the July 2018 version from the PEBLOs. If you do receive a September 2022 version please check with your PEBLO. You can accept the September 2022 version if the PEBLO says it is good.

**Proposed Rating Timeliness Update – Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force**

The Providence DRAS is currently averaging about 70 days to complete proposed ratings due to the backlog of work. MSCs that handle cases assigned to Providence need to be aware of this and issue appropriate expectations to your PEBLOs and SMs. The age of the proposed rating begins after the **IPEB Decision Date** on the PEB Admin Tab, which corresponds with the **Proposed Rating Start Date** on the RO/Rating Activity tab.

\*\*If the IPEB has not yet made their determination of fitness for duty then it is not yet pending a proposed rating, even if the EP 689 was already transferred to the DRAS.

**Exit Interview Requests**

Please ask the SMs to provide their post-separation mailing address at the exit interview. Many final compensation awards are delayed due to the DRAS’s inability to verify a current mailing address so this will help in the event they have not updated it themselves in time for the final award.

Any time a SM reports that they have dependents, please either complete a 686c or provide them one to submit. In many cases we see notification of dependents on an 0820 but since the 686c wasn’t completed the DRAS is unable to pay dependency allowance up front and must develop for the information.

**Guidance on Changes to Examination Appointments**

If a SM wants to/needs to change/re-schedule an exam the SM should contact their PEBLO with reasoning and approval. Once approved the PEBLO should contact the MSC, who will in turn work the new appointment. MSCs should brief this guidance to their PEBLOs, and to their SMs during the Initial Interview. The SM will receive a letter from the vendor with appointment and phone #s, but stress to the SM to follow the PEBLO/MSC guidance.

**VTA Reminders**

Emails from VAVBAWAS/CO/VTA

VTA sends out automated emails per business rules IRT cases and data issues. The email will come from VAVBAWAS/CO/VTA. The email will say “This is a VTA IDES System generated email. PLEASE DO NOT REPLY”.

If you have an issue/concern with an automated email you receive contact VTA Support. As the email says “DO NOT REPLY” to an email from VAVBAWAS/CO/VTA.

Updating MSC Assigned

MSCs and Coaches are reminded that when an MSC departs and is no longer the MSC for the case, the MSC Assigned needs to be updated with the new MSC when the case is enrolled and does not have an Exit Interview completed. A current MSC Assigned is critical to workflow and any contact needed by other VTA users.

Upcoming Conference Calls

The next BDD/IDES Call is scheduled for Tuesday, March 14, 2023, 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), Monday, February 23, 2023.

Open Floor

**Appendix 1: Call Notes from the January 2023 BDD/IDES Conference Call**

**Question:** If the SM submits a [VA Form 20-0995](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-20-0995-ARE.pdf) as part of their IDES claim, do we need to send that 0995 to the PEBLOs?

**Answe**r: There is no M21-1 requirement to provide the [VA Form 20-0995](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-20-0995-ARE.pdf) to PEBLO.

**Question:** Do we decline the claim if we receive the old VA Form 21-526 from a VSO?

**Answer:** When VA forms are not submitted by a VSO representative, the outdated form may be accepted for 12 months after a revision of a form to allow for depletion of existing stock of forms and/or systems updates. Accept the old version through the last day of the month 12 months after the date the form was revised per [M21-1, II.i.2.B.4.a](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000174859/M21-1-Part-II-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-B-Recording-the-Date-of-Receipt-and-Handling-Signatures-and-Outdated-Forms#4a).

**Question:** I have claims where the SM will go to GENMED, and they miss a diagnostic and the contractor closes out the specific DBQ for which the diagnostic was requested. Then, there is no way to know what the diagnostic was requested for. What do you want us to do to get those diagnostics reordered?

**Answer:** Be sure to wait until the entire examination request is complete in EMS. Once complete, if the diagnostic is not included this would make the examination inadequate and would require a rework request to be submitted for the required diagnostic testing. Please follow the instructions for inadequate examination reports located in the [M21-1, IV.i.3.C.1.f](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000180517/M21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-i-Chapter-3-Section-C-Insufficient-Examinations#1g).

**Question:** We are receiving claims with many claims establishment issues such as listing the right and left leg instead of bilateral legs and the contention date is not the day after discharge. Some claims also have an incorrect RAD and thus the date of claim is incorrect too, what should we do besides correcting these errors?

**Answer:** Send the claim number(s) and details of the issues to the BDD Mailbox if the claim is a BDD or BDD-excluded claim, all IDES issues go to the IDES Mailbox. We will address any issues found. We have contacted the Office of Business Integration for further guidance. As a reminder, per [M21-1, III.i.2.F.2.a](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000046277/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-F-Record-Maintenance-During-the-Development-Process#2a), enter issues as contentions when they are:

* expressly claimed by the claimant/Veteran/authorized representative, and/or
* put at issue and require development.

***Important***:

* This information will be made available via Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims-submission service websites and should be easy to understand and in the claimant’s own words, as appropriate.
* The use of contentions for each claim is mandatory; claims processors must enter them as they identify issues associated with a claim.
* Each issue, including non-rating issues, must be entered as a separate contention.

***Examples***:

* A Veteran submits a claim for ringing in the ears. The contention should be entered as *ringing in the ears*.
* A Veteran submits a claim to add a spouse and a child to a running award. Create separate contentions for the spouse and child as follows:
	+ *Dependency claim for***[*name of spouse*]**, and
	+ *Dependency claim for***[*name of child*]**.
* VA receives a claim for "increase in diabetes mellitus to include heart, depression, and numbness in hands." The contentions should be entered as
	+ *diabetes mellitus*
	+ *heart condition*
	+ *depression*, and
	+ *numbness in hands*.

**Question:** The new [VA Form 21-0819](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-0819-ARE.pdf) was released in September 2022. If the PEBLO submits an older version of the 21-0819, should we accept it or send it back to the PEBLO explaining that VA can only accept the current September 2022 version of the 21-0819?

**Answer:** DoD has not issued guidance to use the new version. Continue to accept the VA Form 21-0819 July 2018 version. See [M21-1, II.i.2.B.4.b](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000174859/M21-1-Part-II-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-B-Recording-the-Date-of-Receipt-and-Handling-Signatures-and-Outdated-Forms#4b), which states, "a prior version of a form becomes outdated one year after the date that the form is revised”.

**Question:** I have received quality review errors for not completing the Military Sexual Trauma (MST) development for a BDD and BDD-excluded claims such as requesting the examinations. The M21-1 guidance states only MST coordinators can request the MST examinations?

**Answer:** The CS Quality Review staff has agreed that if the SM is available to attend the examinations and has submitted a copy of their STRs for their current period of service, Pre-Discharge claims processors will request the MST examinations for all BDD and BDD-excluded claims. Please see the guidance in the [August 2022 BDD & IDES Monthly Call Read Ahead](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBADOD/docs/IDES/call-read-ahead-august2022.pdf) for instructions on how to enter the medical opinion for the MST claim examination request.