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 from the March 2024 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 (New beginning Feb 24)**

Microsoft Teams meeting

[Click here to join the meeting](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_N2I0Y2MxMmItZjI3Ni00NmFkLWFjOTMtMWM1YmUzNzQwYWE5%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)

Meeting ID: 228 636 845 446   
Passcode: oJhBDy

**Or call in (audio only)**

[+1 872-701-0185,,205533754#](tel:+18727010185,,205533754# )

Phone Conference ID: 205 533 754#

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 [Calendar Subscriptions (va.gov)](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fvbacoweba5.vba.va.gov%2Fbl%2F21%2FCalendar%2Fcal_Subscribe.asp&data=05%7C01%7C%7C21879ad3ed524078df7108dbb3930978%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C638301216315397959%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=IblMTyApGDJdc7op5Ca6KMk320%2FdtSPPk7tkR9h7IvM%3D&reserved=0) to receive notification that the R/A is available and for notification when the TMS number is active.

General Topics for Discussion

**Call Rules and Expectations**

1. This call is provided by Compensation Service Pre-Discharge Programs to provide updates, address issues and field questions relevant to BDD and IDES policy and procedures. The Pre-Discharge Staff is committed to ensure MSCs and other field personnel have accurate and up-to-date information regarding BDD and IDES policy and procedures.
2. The call is being recording and transcribed for training purposes and will be posted in TMS.
3. You are expected to conduct yourself in a professional courteous manner to include refraining from inappropriate language and comments.
4. Pre-approval by our staff is required before any person provides guidance/updates/other info that is related to BDD or IDES.
5. Do not forward the invite to or invite non-VA employees.

**2024 Military Services Coordinator (MSC) and MSC Supervisors Symposium**

Thank you for your participation in the April 2024 MSC and MSC Supervisors Symposium! The symposium was an opportunity for CS Senior Leaders, Pre-Discharge Staff, MSCs, and MSC Supervisors to exchange ideas and share best practices, program and policy updates, workload management and more. The Pre-Discharge Staff hope you enjoyed your experience and gathered valuable information necessary to support your roles as MSCs in your service to transitioning Service members (SM), Veterans and their families. The staff is reviewing the symposium surveys results and will use the feedback for future symposiums.

A calendar blast will be sent to the field when the TMS number becomes active.

The symposium planning for 2025 is tentative based on budget funding. All details are subject to change.

If you have questions, please send to [Pre-Discharge Programs mailbox](mailto:VAVBAWAS/CO/PREDISCHARGE%20%3cPredischarge.VBACO@va.gov%3e).

**Actions BDD/IDES Employees should take when Missing a Monthly Call**

BDD/IDES employees that miss a Monthly Call should ensure they listen to the recording and read the Read Ahead ASAP. The Recording and Read Ahead are included in the TMS Course for that month.

**VA Form 21-686c**

The Seattle DRAS has reported an uptick in outdated VAF 21-686c’s (Sept 2018 version) being accepted and locally uploaded by MSCs. MSCs are reminded that the most recent version of the VAF 21-686c is August 2022 and should be the version used when accepting paper copies or emailed copies of the form from claimants. We are still seeing the Sept 2018 version being accepted in paper or emailed format and those are not considered valid claims.

Please note: Older claim forms received via VA approved claim submission sites such as VA.gov are acceptable as per M21-1 II.i.2.B.4.a. Accepting Outdated Versions of a VA Form.

**M21-1 Updates**

Below are the most recent updates to the Pre-Discharge M21-1 sections in [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).

**IDES**

* [M21-1, X.i.6.E.3.g](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#3g) - *Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES), Referrals, and Initial Processing*, a completed referral package must include all available STRs (any missing STRs are documented in Section III of the [*VA Form 21-0819*](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-0819-ARE.pdf)). This was added to the notes section, “Accept an unsigned SHA, Part A as complete. Examiners will evaluate the service member and review the SHA, Part A without a signature.”
* [M21-1, X.i.6.E.3.h](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#3g) – *Returning Referrals*, this was added to the exceptions, “the referral package does not contain a completed SHA, Part A. Instead, contact the service member to inform them that VA examinations will not be requested until a completed SHA, Part A is received.”
* [M21-1, X.i.6.E.3.i](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#3g) - *Scheduling and Preparing for the Initial Meeting*, “contact the participant (if possible) beforehand to advise that VA examinations cannot be requested until VA receives a completed SHA, Part A, if not already of record.”
* [M21-1, X.i.6.K.1.d](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#1d) – *Rating Decisions Addressing Claimed Conditions Added After the Initial Meeting With the MSC* was edited to, “Unless the evidence of record is sufficient to make a decision regarding the additional conditions, DRASs should **defer a decision on the additional conditions in the final rating decision**.”

**BDD**

* [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#1) - *Qualifying for Claim Processing Under the BDD Program* was updated to state the SM must be, “within 180 to 90 days prior to discharge,” to qualify for the BDD program. Two other items were added, “***Important***:  Accept an unsigned SHA, Part A as complete. Examiners will evaluate the service member and review the SHA, Part A without a signature.” The below was added to the exceptions, “Do ***not*** exclude the claim from the BDD program if a completed SHA, Part A is not of record. Instead, follow the instructions in [M21-1, Part X, Subpart i, 6.B.3.k](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#3k) to contact the service member to inform them that Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) examinations will not be requested until a completed SHA, Part A is received.”
* [M21-1, X.i.6.B.1.c](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#1) - *Processing of Claims Excluded From the BDD Program* was edited to state, “***Important***:  If the service member is available to report to examinations for 45 days from the date the claim was received (as shown in [M21-1, Part X, Subpart 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)) and STRs from the current period of service are available for the examiner to review, request a general medical examination, along with any necessary specialist examinations, within 5 calendar days of the date the documents (to include STRs) are uploaded to VBMS.

If examinations are not requested, enter the *Secondary Action Required* tracked item noted in [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart i, 1.A.1.e](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000180494/M21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-i-Chapter-1-Section-A-Duty-to-Assist-With-Providing-a-Medical-Examination-or-Opinion).  Input a suspense date of the

* + future date the service member will be available to report for examinations for a 45-day timeframe, *or*
  + day following the future discharge date, if the service member will not be available for examinations until after discharge.”
* [M21-1, X.i.6.B.3.d](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#1) - *Initial Actions Upon Receipt of a BDD Claim* the reference for substantially complete applications was updated, “Review the application to ensure it is substantially complete per [M21-1, Part I, Subpart i, 1.A.4.f](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000181474/M21-1-Part-I-Subpart-i-Chapter-1-Section-A-Description-and-General-Information-on-Duty-to-Notify-and-Duty-to-Assist).”
* [M21-1, X.i.6.B.3.g](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#1) - *PTSD, Including Personal Trauma and MST, Development Requirements*, a reference was added, “general information on personal trauma, see [M21-1, Part VIII, Subpart iv, 1.B.1.a](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000177469/M21-1-Part-VIII-Subpart-iv-Chapter-1-Section-B-Development-for-Posttraumatic-Stress-Disorder-PTSD-Claims-Related-to-Personal-Trauma)”
* [M21-1, X.i.6.B.3.k](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#1) - *Actions to Take for BDD Claims Without Substantially Complete STRs* was significantly edited with instructions for BDD claims received without STRs or the SHA, Part A. These are the same instructions that were discussed on prior calls and are on the [Pre-Discharge Intranet site](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/predischarge.asp). .

BDD Topics

**Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Active Duty Examinations and Required Development**

All active duty MST PTSD Pre-Discharge claims must have a PTSD examination requested. **An MST medical opinion is not required if the SM is on active duty**. This examination must be requested for all BDD claims before the end product (EP) 336 is changed to a rating EP 010, 020 or 110. NWQ routes rating EPs but does not route EP 336s.

MSCs should continue to add the MST special issue, which will route to an MST RO once the 336 is changed to the rating EP. The BDD team is monitoring the BDD MST claims timeliness that are ready for decision and awaiting a rating decision.

Active duty Pre-Discharge PTSD claims can be processed without stressor-verification per [M21-1, X.6.B.3.g](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#3g) for BDD and [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) for IDES. The MSC must ensure all information in [M21-1, VIII.iv.1.B.2.e](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000177469/M21-1-Part-VIII-Subpart-iv-Chapter-1-Section-B-Development-for-Posttraumatic-Stress-Disorder-PTSD-Claims-Related-to-Personal-Trauma#2e) is provided to the SM, which is included below.

“If you have any questions concerning your claim or our request for information, you may call 1-800-827-1000 or visit the following website to locate the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Outreach Coordinator for your area: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/mstcoordinators.asp>.

VA provides free treatment for mental and physical health conditions related to experiences of MST. These services are available to individuals with Veteran status and most former Service members with an Other Than Honorable or uncharacterized (entry-level) discharge. To learn more, including how to access this care, go to [*www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome*](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome) or contact the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) MST Coordinator at a VA medical facility near you. A list of VHA MST Coordinators is available at [*https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome/vha-mst-coordinators.asp*](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome/vha-mst-coordinators.asp) or you can contact your local VA medical facility and ask to speak to the MST Coordinator.

If you are in crisis, call the Veterans Crisis Line at 988 and then press 1, to reach caring, qualified VA responders 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You may also text 838255 or start a confidential chat at [*www.veteranscrisisline.net/chat*](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/chat).”

IDES Topics

**Medical Evaluation End Date (MEED) and Transfer to DRAS Date**

MSCs are reminded that the “Transferred to DRAS Date” should not be entered and saved unless there is an “Exam End Date” and a “MEED”. Current data shows MSCs are entering and saving the Transferred to DRAS Date with no Exam End Date and MEED.

Note: MSCs should:

* monitor pending exams ([M21-1,X.i.6.F.3.a](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000177955/M21-1-Part-X-Subpart-i-Chapter-6-Section-F-Integrated-Disability-Evaluation-System-IDES-Development-and-Examinations)) to complete the Exam Stage.
* provide an update to the PEBLO (MEED) or correct any issues found. Delaying exams to the PEBLO slows the case and may put unnecessary stress on the SM

**Converting Documents to PDF**

MSCs are reminded that forms uploaded to VBMS should be converted to PFD prior to upload. If the document isn’t PDF, it shows up with boxes that can still be edited. The view of the non-PDF document shows up different if you use Chrome vs Edge as well.

**Pregnant SMs**

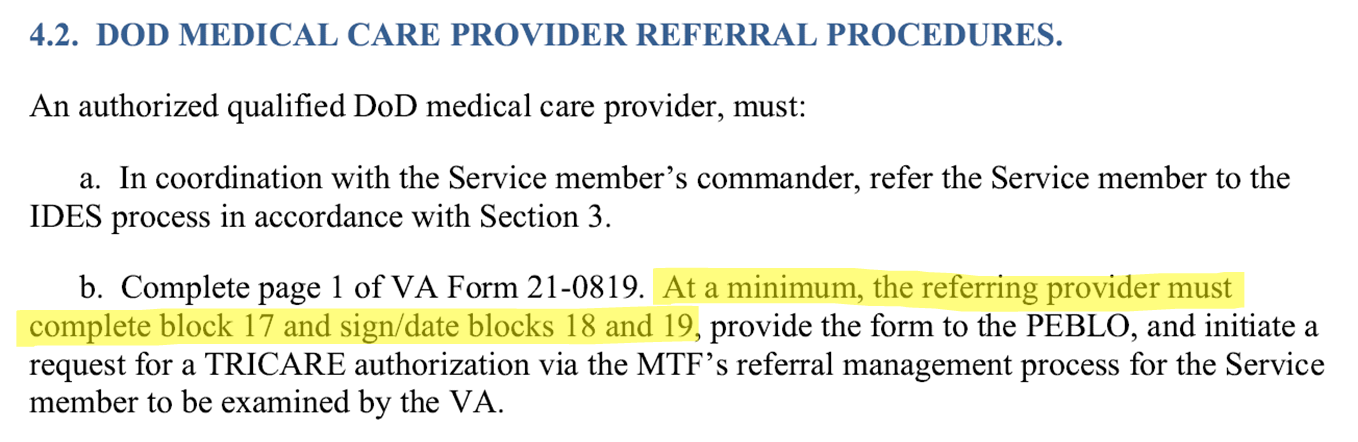
MSCs are reminded to follow [M21-1.X.i.6.K.3](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000177960/M21-1-Part-X-Subpart-i-Chapter-6-Section-K-Special-Situations-Related-to-Integrated-Disability-Evaluation-System-IDES) (paying particular attention to sections C and D) when an IDES SM is pregnant. This is a small population, but many of the cases are handled improperly which leads to inquiries from the Services.

**Vendor Phone #s to Re-schedule Exams**

* OSHS - Optum Serve Health Services (formerly LHI): 1-866-933-8387.
* QTC - The QTC Management Inc: 1-800-682-9701.
* VES - Veterans Evaluation Service: 1-877-637-8387 (CONUS). Note: This is an updated #.

**VA Form 0819 and Provider Signature**

MSCs are reminded that referrals will include the 0819 dated March 2023 and it will be signed by the referring provider (not a PEBLO). Referrals that do not meet these requirements will be returned as incomplete. Section 4.2 of DoD Manual 1332.18, Volume 1, effective February 24, 2023, states:



Blocks 17, 18 and 19 discussed in b. (yellow highlight) match the March 2023 0819 form only.

Veterans Tracking Application (VTA)

VTAs Transition to Salesforce (SF)

We continue to work through issues/concerns with VTA 2.0. Users are encouraged to report any technical issues they encounter to the [VTA Mailbox](mailto:vrst@vba.va.gov). Please provide details (screenshots, case #, the tab/data field that is causing the issue, other).

VTA Registration for New Users

New applicants must use and follow the March 2024 Registration Instructions. They are posted on the [Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) - Pre-Discharge Programs (21C-PDP)](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/IDES.asp) web page under IDES Tools and Links. Applications that are not filled out incorrectly may be rejected and user will have to re-apply, which slows access.

Also, the applicant must apply themselves using their PIV.

Exit Interview Start Date Data Field

This data field should be read only but is currently editable. MSCs will not edit/add data to this data field. The field auto-populates with the date the Final Disposition Date is entered and starts the 14-day clock to complete an Exit Interview.

Exit Interview Pending and Completed Reports

We have identified calculation issues with these reports, and they are scheduled to be fixed June 6.

No New Exams Ordered Checkbox

This checkbox is now functioning. Use this option if no new exams are needed (exams done previously and are good. Ex: BDD claim now IDES). MSC must enter SHA Provider and SHA Exam Site. Once the checkbox is clicked and data saved, the SHA Exam Requested Date, SHA Exam Returned Date, Exam End Date and Medical Evaluation End Date will populate with current date.

Upcoming Conference Calls

The next BDD/IDES Call is scheduled for **Tuesday, June 11**, 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 May 27.

Open Floor

**Appendix 1: Call Notes from the March 2024 BDD/IDES Conference Call**

**Question**: For BDD claims with an MST, do we add a special issue or a flash?

**Answer**: Add the MST special issue to BDD, BDD-excluded and IDES claims in accordance with TMS Course 4655107 (Military Sexual Trauma for Military Service Coordinators).

**Question**: Regarding releasing exams (timeliness). Unable to find anything in manual on timeliness for releasing exams.

**Answer**: There is nothing currently in the manual that states a specific number of days, however we expect them to get completed as soon as possible, so that we can get exams over and the case may proceed.

**Question**: As of March 9, CERNER records for Chicago has been converted. For IDES- if we are getting the records GENESIS from the PEBLO, do we need to go into JLV and download records still? Same for BDD, if getting records from SM or automatic upload- do we need to go in and download those records from JLV?

**Answer**: Comply with the EHRM National Process Memorandum dated March 9, 2024, for all claims processor responsibilities. Memo is [here](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/rating/docs/ehrm%20national%20process%20memo.docx).

**Question**: If we have a SM seen off post by a specialist and we can't get those records, but we have the Ft Carson DR who referred to the DR- is that grounds for returning the case to the PEBLO for missing records? If main records for the referring condition are missing?

**Answer**: The PEBLO should provide all records associated with the referrals and treatment in accordance with [X.i.6.E.2.a](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000177953/M21-1-Part-X-Subpart-i-Chapter-6-Section-E-Integrated-Disability-Evaluation-System-IDES-Referrals-and-Initial-Processing?query=X.i.6.E.2.a) (DoD Process for Referring Individuals Into IDES).

**Question**: We were instructed to delete the service dates from the military tab in VBMS then re-insert for BDD claims, then leave them unverified. When you do that, if you have a clarification to do, those dates drop out. Is that a system issue or am I responsible for that? What type of issue is that?

**Answer**: This is a system issue. Please document a good VBMS note and take screen shots to produce in potential errors and send to the pre-discharge box.

**Question**: Contacting a BDD claimant to verify their direct deposit information and not asking for any other information or further discussions can create mistrust. Especially, if we just call them to verify banking information when they've had a face to face with the VSO to fill out the 526EZ.

**Answer**: We understand that contacting a SM after they have spoken with a VSO can create mistrust. However, we should convey the reason why we’re validating this information. The SM can be directed to VA.gov where they can update their direct deposit information without claims processors involvement. It is the agencies obligation to protect the SM from fraud. This information was confirmed by the CS Quality Assurance staff.