Monthly Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) and

Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES)

Conference Call Read Ahead

Compensation Service

BDD/IDES (212A)

February 9, 2021 — 2 PM ET

The Compensation Service BDD/IDES 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.

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 January Call are in Appendix 1. The TMS # for this month’s call will be provided during the call and should 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**

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3Ameeting_MzlhN2FlN2YtYTFhNS00NjExLWEwMzMtYWEwYjE0YzU1Y2Qx%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  United States (Toll)

Conference ID: 448 196 643#

The Read Ahead and Slides will be attached to the Chat (may have to scroll up in the Chat) and can also be found in the Files link on the call. They are also located on the [IDES Homepage](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/IDES.asp) and on the [BDD Homepage.](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/predischarge.asp)

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



\*\* After the call starts, the Teams Chat **will not** be used for questions/comments/responses to other callers/etc. Please adhere to this request and do not type in the chat box unless asked to by 212A staff.

Ask questions over the phone or send an email to the appropriate staff corporate mailbox.

Please mute your microphone and turn off your camera by clicking on the appropriate icon. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1:

Below (Figure 2) is what your microphone and camera icons should look like when it is muted and turned off. Click the microphone icon to unmute if you need to ask a question (do not unmute if you do not need to speak).

Figure 2:



If you are dialed in via your phone, ensure your phone is muted.

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.

**Housekeeping Items**

* Intent and format of the MSC Call
* Suggestions to improve the call
* Topics for the call and Open Floor

General Topics for Discussion

BDD and IDES Corporate Email Addresses

MSCs and other VA personnel should not provide the BDD (Predischarge.VBACO@va.gov) and IDES (IDES.VBACO@VA.GOV) email addresses to DoD counter parts. These email addresses are for VA personnel. DoD should be contacting you with any questions/issues, and then you can contact the appropriate box if needed. We will discuss in the IDES Specific Topics section the procedures to take if the MTF has exam issues/concerns.

Military Service Verification

As DoD and VA continue to improve the process of automatically and electronically transferring documents between departments, it is key to have accurate system/corporate information. [M21-1 III.ii.3.C.7.a](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014125/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-3-Section-C-System-Updates#7a), instructs that any unverified period of active duty is to be entered into VBMS as soon as VA is notified of that unverified period of active duty. The unverified service will then be updated once VA receives all information required to verify military service.

Unverified periods of service include both past and current Entrance on Date (EOD) and Release from Active Duty (RAD) dates. Typically, VA’s first notification of EOD/RAD will be found on the VAF 21-526EZ. Pre-Discharge claims processors may also use resources such as [Veterans Information Solution (VIS)](https://vaww.visr.aac.va.gov/vis/), [Defense Manpower Data Center’s (DMDC) Status Finder](https://dwp.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/status_finder.jsp), or the [DMDC’s Service Members Civil Relief Act (SCRA)](https://scra.dmdc.osd.mil/scra/) website when adding/editing periods of service in VBMS.

DoD/VA data transfer business rules require system records to be flagged as Pre-Discharge and either have a future RAD date such BDD’s RAD+1 date or a blank RAD date as commonly seen in IDES. To maximize our automation success, ensure the RAD date for the claimant’s current period of service is either in the future or blank. If blank, place a note into VBMS to alert other claims processors and the Quality Review Team (QRT) of the reason behind this.

BDD Specific Topics

**BDD Claims Received without Service Treatment Records (STRs)**

If STRs are not received with the BDD claim, but the Service member (SM) has 180 to 90 days still remaining on active duty and meets all other BDD requirements as shown in [M21-1, III.i.2.A.1.d](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014099/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-A-General-Information-on-Pre-Discharge-Claims)., do not exclude the claim from the BDD program as directed in [M21-1, III.i.2.B.1.j](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014101/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-B-Division-of-Responsibilities-for-Processing-Benefits-Delivery-at-Discharge-BDD-and-BDD-Excluded-Claims#1j) and the [Questions and Answers (Q and A’s)](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBADOD/docs/IDES/FY20MSCVirtualTrainingIMQandAsfor19and20AUG2020FINAL.pdf) from the MSC Virtual Training 2020. Per [M21-1, III.i.2.B.1.j](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014101/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-B-Division-of-Responsibilities-for-Processing-Benefits-Delivery-at-Discharge-BDD-and-BDD-Excluded-Claims#1j), the claim will not be excluded until the SM has less than 90 days before their future discharge date, and VA has not received the STRs. Also, contact the SM by phone and letter to request their STRs per [M21-1, III.i.2.B.1.j](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014101/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-i-Chapter-2-Section-B-Division-of-Responsibilities-for-Processing-Benefits-Delivery-at-Discharge-BDD-and-BDD-Excluded-Claims#1j). Once the SM reaches day 89 before their discharge date and the STRs have still not been received, then, the claim will be excluded from the BDD program on day 89.

Normally, upon receipt of a BDD claim without STRs, an EP 336 with the *Pre-Discharge Excluded*claim label would be established. However, the *Pre-Discharge Excluded* was mistakenly deactivated in VBMS. We are working to reactivate the *Pre-Discharge Excluded*claim label for EP 336 in VBMS possibly by February 14, 2021. Until this claim label is reactivated, establish the claim as an EP 336 with the *BDD* claim label until the STRs have been received or the claim reaches day 89 before discharge and the STRs have not been received. Select *BDD* as the Pre-Discharge type when establishing this type of claims.

Examinations for these claims should not be requested until the STRs are received per guidance received from the Medical Disability Examination Program Office (MDEPO).

**BDD YouTube Video and Fact Sheets**

The [BDD Fact Sheet](https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/general/BDDFactSheet.pdf), [Separation Health Assessment (SHA) Fact Sheet](https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/serviceconnected/SeparationHealthAssessment.pdf) and the [BDD Promotional YouTube Video](https://youtu.be/-m4T4rXNfAs) have all been updated due to the phased sunset of eBenefits. All references to eBenefits in these fact sheets and the video have been replaced with [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/). Please distribute these BDD promotional materials. Links to the [BDD Fact Sheet](https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/general/BDDFactSheet.pdf), [SHA Fact Sheet](https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/serviceconnected/SeparationHealthAssessment.pdf) and the [BDD Promotional YouTube Video](https://youtu.be/-m4T4rXNfAs) can all be found under the “Additional Pre-Discharge Links and Materials” heading on the [Pre-Discharge Intranet site](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/predischarge.asp).

The posted dates for the BDD and SHA Fact Sheets on the [VA fact sheet page](https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fbenefits.va.gov%2FBENEFITS%2Ffactsheets.asp&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cb2b9766cc2ce47fbc43308d8c93b9b28%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637480605124089671%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=z8vAEXoOZ6hjJ3ghBOe%2FP4y28dnETkNhRVcPwKST6oI%3D&reserved=0) will be updated once the Office of Strategic Engagement (OSE) Digital Media team receives the Spanish versions of the fact sheets. The January 2021 date on the last page of both fact sheets is accurate.

Key message to use when talking about the migration to VA.gov:

* Migrating [eBenefits](https://www.ebenefits.va.gov) to [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov/) began in FY 2017 so that users can visit one site instead of multiple sites. The majority of VBA features in eBenefits have been moved to [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov/) with the final features transitioning by the end of April 2021.
* Most key features are currently only available at [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov/), to include: filing a claim, claims status, Chapter 36, direct deposit, payment history and uploading evidence.
* VBA is working with our partners and stakeholders, such as VSOs, to communicate the [eBenefits](https://www.ebenefits.va.gov) migration to [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov/) to their members, customers and clients.
* VBA will provide guidance to all [eBenefits](https://www.ebenefits.va.gov) users (Veterans, Service members, spouses, care givers and other stakeholders) to visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) and the option to create a new credential using the ID.me site provided on [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov/).

**Contention Date for BDD/BDD-Excluded Claims**

It was recently brought to our attention that the contention dates for BDD and BDD-Excluded claims received via VA.gov reflects the date the claim was submitted on VA.gov and not the date of claim (RAD+1). We are currently working with OI&T to have the contention default date changed to RAD+1 which is consistent with the manual establishment of these claims.

At this time there are no known issues with processing so there is no need to update the contention dates to RAD+1. If any hindering issues are raised, we will provide guidance to the field as soon as possible.

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 as of February 2, 2021.

|  |
| --- |
| **BDD Timeliness Data** |
| **Data Points** | **Goal** | **February 2, 2021** |
| **Completed FYTD** |  | **7,532** |
| **Receipts FYTD** |  | **8,342** |
| **Pending** |  | **11,406** |
| **# Completed w/in 30 Days of Discharge** |  | **2,013** |
| **% Completed w/in 30 Days of Discharge** | **100%** | **27%** |
| **Avg. Days to Complete FYTD** | **30** | **93** |

***Source:*** *Tableau BDD History Report, February 3, 2021*

IDES Specific Topics

**Importance of Service members (SM) Attending Medical Appointments**

MSCs should stress to SMs during the initial interview the importance of attending exams. If they can’t attend, they should cancel in advance rather than being considered a no-show (not showing up for the exam).

QTC and VES have different procedures if a SM cannot attend/needs to cancel an exam.

**QTC:** The SM should call their PEBLO/MSC about cancelling an appointment. If the SM calls QTC to cancel an appointment, QTC will advise the SM that they will keep the appointment until they hear from the MSC or PEBLO to ensure the Command/PEBLO is informed and they truly need to reschedule, and are not delaying the process for non-approved reasons. If the cancellation is approved, QTC will contact the SM to re-schedule.

**VES:** The SM should call VES to cancel an exam (re-schedule if possible). The SM does not need to have MSC/PEBLO approval to cancel an exam, however, as a courtesy the SM should inform their MSC. Recently, it was brought to our attention that there is some reluctance from SMs in Germany to attend exams, particularly diagnostics. At this time IDES exams are an exception to travel restrictions. VES may notify the MSC and/or PEBLO if the SM fails to attend a scheduled appointment.

If this impacts any of your caseload, please continue to remind SMs that they should be attending all appointments. If the SMs have any questions as far as leaving their Post/Base under COVID travel restrictions, all waivers to attend these exams should be discussed with their Chain of Command.

**Date Stamps and Annotations**

MSCs are reminded, no wet-ink date stamp or CEST annotation is required on IDES applications that are submitted electronically. The date of receipt of these documents will be captured electronically when documents are uploaded to the VBMS eFolder.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **III.i.2.D.3.m****.  Capturing the Date of Receipt of Electronic Documents** |  | When documents are provided electronically, the MSC must ensure that the date of receipt is accurately recorded in VBMS. When uploading documents in VBMS, the MSC must make certain that the DATE OF RECEIPT field on the UPLOAD DOCUMENT screen, accurately reflects the date the document first came into VA possession. ***Reference***:  For instructions on uploading documents into the eFolder, see the [*VBMS Job Aid - Adding Documents in VBMS eFolders*](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBMS/Resources_Job_Aids.asp). |

**Print to PDF Instructions**

During the January IDES/BDD monthly call, a few MSCs mentioned the VA Form 526EZ would appear blank in VBMS. To prevent that from happening you can follow the [Print to PDF Instructions](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBADOD/docs/IDES/526ezgoesblankandPrinttoPDF.docx) under What’s New on the [IDES Homepage.](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/IDES.asp)

**HAIMS/VBMS/STR/DBQ Training Follow Up**

The IDES Program Office conducted HAIMS/VBMS/STR/DBQ training during the month of January 2021. The new procedure was implemented February 1, 2021. The staff received several questions, suggestions and additional feedback and would like to cover some of the topics below:

* Seattle and Providence DRAS Quality Review Teams will provide a grace period (details covered in next topic)
* Training Power Point slides have been updated and posted on the [IDES Homepage](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/IDES.asp)
* TMS ID has been activated; the recording and PPT have been added to TMS # 4563452.
* After accessing the Pending CEST Report in VTA, filter by your Military Treatment Facility (MTF)
* Please ensure Service is verified before requesting exams, as this could stop DBQs from being transferred to HAIMS
* Reminder to view the Notes section in VBMS – Look for note “SHA exam results successfully transferred to DoD (HAIMS)”
* Confirmed with HAIMS/VBMS that additional medical records that have been uploaded to HAIMS will appear in VBMS
* Confirmed additional DBQs that are ordered after original DBQs are transferred will flow over to HAIMS
* If MTFs 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

**Quality Review for HAIMS/VBMS/DBQ Automation Process**

Per [M21-4 6.4.d.](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000037939/Chapter-6.--Quality-Review-Team-%28QRT%29#4)(Grace Period for IQRs) theQRTs will provide a 30 calendar day grace period for any new guidance provided in M21-1 before citing deficiencies as critical errors. The grace period is counted as 30 calendar days after the relevant Veterans Affairs (VA) Key Changes document is published. So, for the changes resulting from the HAIMS to VBMS STRs-DBQs Transfer guidance, the grace period will begin February 1, 2021, and critical errors will be called starting on March 1, 2021.

An error noted prior to the expiration of the 30-calendar day grace period will be recorded on the employees Quality checklist in QMS as a Comment requiring correction to ensure the employee is made aware of the change and ensure the case is corrected. However, the employee will not be cited for a critical quality error.

To reiterate, the 30-day grace period applies only to those errors that could be a result of the new HAIMS to VBMS STRs-DBQs transfer process. The 30-day period allows for acclimation to the new procedures prior to critical errors being cited. It is important that MSCs are diligent to leave notes in VBMS and VTA if there are any challenges or anomalies with this new process on any particular case. This will aid reviewers with evaluation of cases and inform them of the actions that the MSC took.

**Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA) in USMC IDES Cases**

Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA) is an option (currently only offered by the Marine Corps) for SMs who have between 15-20 years of service and are found unfit in IDES. TERA often offers a higher level of monthly pay, so many Marines will elect TERA over disability retirement. Historically, Marines who elected TERA have been removed from IDES and immediately disenrolled from VTA. These cases were processed as *returned to duty* (RTD) cases; the VA claims were closed, and these SMs were required to initiate new VA claims to processed outside of IDES.

Providence DRAS has been working with HQ Marine Corps and the Navy PEB to improve this process and to ensure that these cases remain enrolled in VTA, so that DRAS can award benefits upon discharge. This will result in more timely delivery of benefits, less burden on the Veteran, and eliminate duplicative efforts in the VA claim process. A new “TERA” deferment reason has been added to VTA for this purpose. When TERA cases are placed into this deferment status, MSCs should not complete the RTD/disenrollment procedures described [M21-1 III.i.2.E.2.a](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000046269/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-E---Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-%28VA%29-Responsibilities-Based-on-Medical-Evaluation-Board-%28MEB%29-and-Physical-Evaluation-Board-%28PEB%29-Outcomes#2); these cases will remain enrolled in VTA and proceed to DRAS for final ratings

**Traveling to Attend QTC Medical Exams That Exceed Contractual Mileage Limits**

There have been many questions concerning SMs traveling beyond the local area for QTC IDES exams. Current contractual rules state that QTC exams will be within 50 miles for the SHA and within 100 miles for any Specialties. QTC tries to adhere to this rule, but examiners may not be available in a certain area or for other reasons which may require SMs to travel farther than the 50/100 rule. Below is the typical process for QTC IDES exams that do not meet the mileage rule.

* QTC will contact SM with exam info/to schedule the exams after receiving the exam request from the MSC
* If the exam is beyond the 50/100-mile rule QTC will ask SM if traveling the distance is ok
* If SM ok’s the distance QTC will submit a waiver to MDEO
* If waiver is approved the exam will be scheduled and SM notified by QTC via letter with time and place of appointments as the normal process of notification
* If waiver is dis-approved, QTC will contact the SM informing him/her of that decision and attempt to schedule the exam with-in limits or hold the exam request until a with-in limits examiner is found
* If SM has concerns/questions whether they are authorized to travel outside of the mileage limits, he/she should contact the PEBLO or Unit (not the MSC) about any travel restrictions
* Once the mileage concern/question is answered by the PEBLO or Command, SM should call QTC with a yes or no on attending the exam(s)
* If the exams can be attended QTC will finalize appointments
* If the exams can’t be attended, the exam will be put on hold until an examiner with-in the mileage limits is found
* QTC will contact SM when an examiner with-in the miles limit is located/scheduled

Note: Turning down the exams will delay the IDES process.

Note: To reiterate: The MSC is not the SM’s POC about exams and mileage travel rules (restrictions/approval). SM should contact his/her Unit and/or PEBLO for clarification on their Chain of Command travel restrictions.

Note: VES procedure will be provided in March.

**DoD Requesting Exam Clarification**

When MEB providers/MTFs have questions or find issues with IDES exams conducted by QTC or VES providers, they should first contact the MSC with their concerns. The MSC should forward the MEB concerns to the Medical Disability Exam Program Office (MDEPO) through their corporate mailbox at ContractExam.VBAVACO@va.gov. MDEPO Staff will review these requests, determine if corrective action is warranted and respond to the MSC assigned. MDEPO Staff will provide guidance if corrective action is warranted and/or if the MSC or DRAS must enter the rework request in EMS.

Please keep in mind that the exam issues/concerns should be related to an insufficient exam for rating purpose (i.e. incorrect or missing information on the DBQ) not just a preference or change from the MEB providers. Also, exam concerns should be addressed once all the exam results are received in VBMS not one by one. If a SM has an issue/complaint about an exam, the SM should bring it up to their PEBLO/MEB, who will follow the above guidance. The SM should not be contacting the contract providers directly with their exam concerns.

A SM, like a Veteran, can only provide lay evidence and their assessment of a VA examination would be considered as a lay statement and submitted in their file for review by the rating activity, but will not generally require a new examination or addendum unless the MEB or DRAS request this through the guidance above.

[***M21-1 III.iv.5.A.6.c.***](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014203/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-iv%2C-Chapter-5%2C-Section-A---Principles-of-Reviewing-Evidence-and-Decision-Making)***Acceptable Lay Evidence***

A claimant’s own statement, covering in sufficient detail a condition that is within his/her ability to describe, such as his/her own symptoms, may to that extent constitute evidence.

Rationale: While such statements have self-serving aspects, the claimant is often the most qualified source to describe the circumstances of the disabling effects of the disease or injury.

Note: Provide this information to your PEBLOs/PEBLO Supervisor. DoD should not contact the IDES Mailbox

about exams.

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 January 2021.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage/Phase** | **IDES Goal (AD/NAD)** | **January 2021 (AD/NAD)** |
| **Claim Dev**  | **5/11** | **12/26** |
| **Medical Stage** | **32** | **139/147** |
| **Proposed Ratings** | **20** | **3/7** |
| **Recon Ratings**  | **4** | **9/15** |
| **Exit Interviews** | **14** | **9/13** |
| **Final Ratings** | **20/na** | **13/na** |

 ***Source:*** *VTA Completed Reports (Days to Complete Including Deferment) February 1, 2021 (9am ET).*

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

**VTA Specific Topics**

**Disenrolling Cases**

PEBLOs are responsible for requesting the disenrollment of IDES cases. If there is information that a case is going to be disenrolled, current case data should typically not be removed as the data is needed to show the status of case when it was disenrolled. If you feel the data needs to be removed contact the IDES Mailbox for guidance before removing any data.

Upcoming Teleconferences

The next BDD/IDES Call is scheduled for Tuesday, March 9, 2021, 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 22, 2021.

The next BDD/IDES Coaches Call is scheduled for March 4, 2021, 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 COB, Monday February 15, 2021.

Open Floor

**Seattle DRAS VSC Development Pilot**

The Seattle DRAS VSC Development Pilot began February 1st and applies to all Army cases. A few reminders are below, and the Seattle DRAS will be on to answer any questions.

* Special Issue: Use the IDES Development Special Issue, not the Ready For Exam Special Issue
* Case Brokering: Place claim in OPEN status; broker EP 689 to the Seattle DRAS
* Contact Info: VAVBASEA/RO/DRAS (DRAS.VBASEA@va.gov)

**Appendix 1:** **Call Notes from the January 2021 Comp Service BDD/IDES Conference Call**

**Claiming Exposure to COVID-19**

**Question:** What classification would we use, administrative, or put it under respiratory?

**Answer:** Either would be accepted, however we at MDE do not tell you which one to select, that is an OFO function and should be discussed with your Quality Team.

**Question:** What is the story on the COVID positive aspect of somebody after they’ve been tested positive or in quarantine?

**Answer:** A negative test is not required from any of our vendors. Contractors will ask question during the protocol screening questions concerning quarantine period after a positive or confirmed diagnosis or suspected exposure. We have had two reports of where a person at QTC requested a negative screening however this has been resolved with QTC and is not part of their or VA’s requirement to schedule an examination.

**Requesting DBQs in Cases Involving PTSD and Additional Mental Health Issues**

**Question:** When claimant claims several health conditions (PTSD, Anxiety, Depression), shouldn’t we combine those as all one condition?

**Answer:** Enter issues as contentions when they are expressly claimed by the claimant, in the claimant’s own words, to include non-rating issues and they each must be entered as a separate contention. M21-1 III.iii.1.F.2.a.

**Requesting the GENMED Separation Health Assessment (SHA) and Specialist Exams**

**Question:** If the SM comes back within the five days or so to add additional conditions, then we would use that DBQ for joint or whatever DBQ is related to their condition, correct – if we’ve already submitted the exam request?

**Answer:** Ordering a specific needed specialty/specialist examination is permitted, remembering to place an appropriate note into VTA & VBMS. For claims received after five days of the initial interview, VA is not obligated to request additional examinations.

**Download of DBQs From Vendor Portals Will No Longer Be Permitted**

**Question:** Many times, DBQs for NAD cases don’t show up in JLV for us to look at so we download from QTC’s site and send them to the PEBLOs via SAFE.

**Answer:** Pull from VBMS and not the exam portal, which is certified by the vender. Additionally, if exams do not show up in VBMS, notify ContractExam.VBAVACO@va.gov .

**HAIMS to VBMS STRs/DBQs Transfer Training Schedule**

**Question:** Will this just be used for IDES or can we use this for BDD, if our MTF is good with it?

**Answer:** This process is currently only for IDES and applies for all branches of service. We are working towards this for BDD with all the branches of service and DoD, but not right now.

**Question:** Are we still expected to deliver the exams noted with the new change?

**Answer:** Starting February 1, 2021, MSCs will not need to send exams over SAFE or encrypted email, only in the event of IT failure. If an IT glitch occurs, annotated troubleshooting actions are required. The PEBLO will submit the needed Help Desk ticket.

**Identifying Completed QTC Exams using Posted Cases Report in ExamTrack**

**Question**: If the pull presents no data, do we have to scrub out these large reports or send the whole report?

**Answer:** At this time if you follow the instructions and the system shows no data, then you would not be required to provide anything to the PEBLO at this time. We are working MDEO staff to identify a solution or workarounds. There is no alternative action you need to take at this time.

**Sharing QTC Exam Scheduling Report with PEBLOs**

**Question:** Why can’t QTC communicate with us that there has been a change on exams?

**Answer:** Currently there is no contractual obligation for QTC to email any VA employee, but to use EMS.

**Question:** How can we get timely results back from QTC? All the exams are completed, we are just waiting for signatures.

**Answer:** Exams must go through Quality Assurance before being sent to the VA. QTC has hired more new QA employees.

**Question:** Is it possible that we just send the VA Form 526EZ when we send the C&P exam results?

**Answer:** A lot of the MEBs are prepping up the NARSUM based on the claimed condition on the application. We’ve agreed to provide the VAF 21-526EZ at that point of the process.