DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Washington, D.C. 20420

VA Video Connect User Guide

Office of Administrative Review
Program Administration

Document Change Control

Date of Change	Author(s)	Brief Description of Change
06/08/2021	OAR Program Administration	Issuance of VAVC user guide
10/13/2022	OAR Program Administration	Added system enhancements to section 2.4; Updated images in Appendix A
01/19/2023	OAR Program Administration	Added instructions for blurred background

Contents

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this user guide is to familiarize users with VA Video Connect (VAVC). VAVC provides a virtual solution for Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) employees to conduct hearings or informal conferences with Veterans and claimants.

There are two components to VAVC:

1. Scheduling virtual appointments
2. Holding virtual appointments

The scheduling component for VAVC is done by Caregility. Once the appointment is scheduled, then VAVC sets up a secure virtual meeting room for Veterans, claimants, and their representatives to communicate benefit related issues with VA personnel.

This provides a convenient virtual option for Veterans and claimants in holding a hearing or informal conference.

This guidance only assists with using VAVC technology for virtual hearings or informal conferences. Please continue to comply with the procedures as outlined in M21-1, Adjudication Procedures Manual and M21-5, Appeals and Reviews, when utilizing this technology.

# 2. VA Video Connect Teleconferencing System

The VAVC teleconferencing system is comprised of two components: 1) Caregility Scheduler and 2) the audio/video teleconferencing system. Prior to scheduling or hosting a meeting in VAVC, please review the procedures below to become familiar with the processes for scheduling and hosting meetings with VAVC.

2.1 Caregility Scheduling System

The Caregility Scheduler is a component of the VA Video Connect teleconferencing system. This is a scheduling system that allows VA users to schedule virtual meetings and send auto-generated notification emails. Claimants or accredited representatives link into a teleconference using their personal devices such as a phone, tablet, or computer. In addition, Caregility Scheduler has data extraction functionality so users can track or manage the scheduled virtual meeting.

Step 1: Getting Started

Using your internet browser (Google Chrome is recommended), access the VAVC Scheduler to schedule the meeting time and complete claimant information https://scheduler.vc.va.gov/scheduler/appointments. With your Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card, you can select "Auto Sign In" for access or use your VA username and password for access.
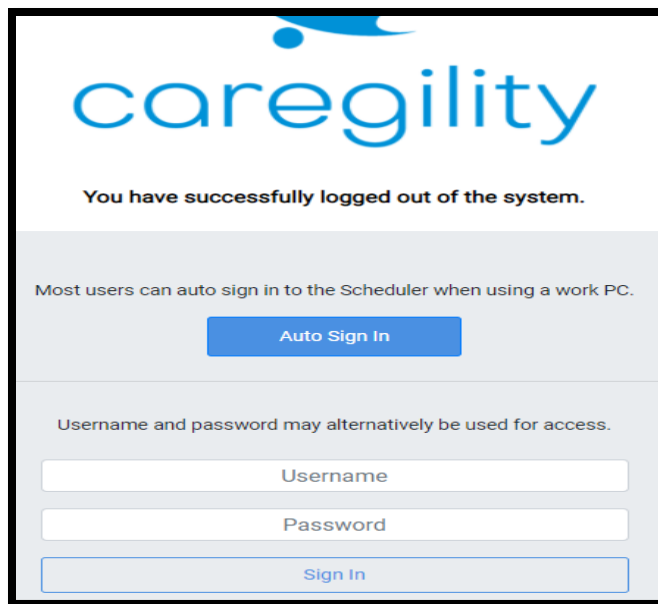
Step 2: The Time Zone value defaults to the Eastern time zone. Select the claimant's Time Zone, Start Date & Time, and End Date & Time.

Selecting **Start Date & Time** values will pre-populate the **End Date & Time** values to be 1 hour after the start time by default.

Step 3: Create an appointment in the **Appointment Details** section.

Step 4: After completing the appointment details, save the appointment. Once the appointment is saved, an automatic email will be sent to the conference host, claimant, and/or accredited representative, if applicable.
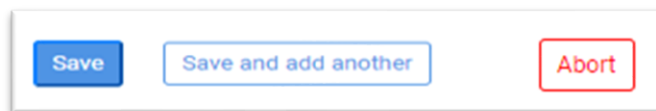
Example: Below is a sample initial notification letter sent to the Conference Host and other parties, such as the claimant and/or accredited representative. This is based on the information inputted by the user.   There are additional sample notification letters in Appendix A.

Important: Whenever scheduling or making changes to an appointment, please upload a copy of the "host" email notification into VBMS to document the scheduled informal conference appointment.

2.2 Scheduling the VAVC Meeting

1. Contact the claimant and/or representative by phone to obtain a valid email address to send the VAVC meeting invitation.
   Note: A valid email address of the person requesting the informal conference is required. If an email address cannot be obtained, the meeting invitation, to include the conference link, cannot be issued.
2. Schedule the hearing or informal conference in the claimant's/representative's time zone.
3. Once the conference is scheduled, an automatic email will be sent to the conference host, claimant and/or representative.
4. When conducting back-to-back conferences, conference hosts should be mindful of the next scheduled appointment.
   • As a best practice, allow half hour increments between conferences to allow for reflection and finalization of the informal conference worksheet.

Please note: If the claimant or representative has not joined the meeting after 15 minutes, please conduct a courtesy call to remind them of the scheduled appointment. If the informal conference is not held, please upload a VA Form 27-0820, *Report of General Information* to the claims folder.

5. The following are the recommended platforms for best performance while

conferencing in VAVC and the Caregility Scheduling.

Browser video support		
Product	Version	Notes
Google Chrome WebRTC (VP8/VP9/H.264)	61 and later	64-bit version only
Mozilla Firefox	68 and later	
Microsoft Edge	all chromium-based versions, and HTML versions 41 and later	
Opera	53 and later	
Apple Safari on macOS	Safari 11.1 and later	Safari version 11 onwards uses WebRTC and therefore is supported by the latest web app. Safari versions 6-10 requires Adobe Flash Player 11 and later plugin, and is supported by the legacy web app only.
Apple Safari on iOS	iOS version 11.2 and later	

Notes:
- We strongly recommend using the latest publicly-released version (i.e. "stable version" or "supported release") of a browser.
- RTMP media streaming is also supported in all browsers.
- The Webapp (WebRTC) can be run in Chrome and Firefox on a Linux operating system.
- Instant Messaging to and from Skype for Business / Lync clients is supported in all browsers.

2.3 Preparing for the VAVC Meeting

1. Locate a secure and private area within your office/telework space prior to the call. The area must be free from distractions and audible background noise.
2. Test the audio and recording features prior to your meeting.
   - The video teleconferencing feature is optional for AMA higher-level review informal conferences; however, audio is required.
   - Ensure a neutral background during your call if the video feature is used (i.e., be mindful of pictures or bookshelves in view).
   - Additionally, adhere to the professional dress code for your local office when on camera.

2.3.1 Using the Audio Functionality in VAVC

The conferences host or participants may adjust certain audio functions during the conference

- Conference host can close the conference once all participants have joined the call
- Conference host can mute or unmute all participants
- Claimants and representatives can mute their personal microphones

VAVC Meeting Hyperlink

Use the "Join VAVC Meeting" hyperlink provided in the email notification and select "Join Audio", when prompted.

Example: Email link to join the VAVC conference.

When you are ready to enter the virtual conference room, please click the link below.

https://vc.va.gov/webapp2/?name=Veteran&join=1&media=&escalate=1&conference=OAR1889036@vc.va.gov&pin=6056076443#
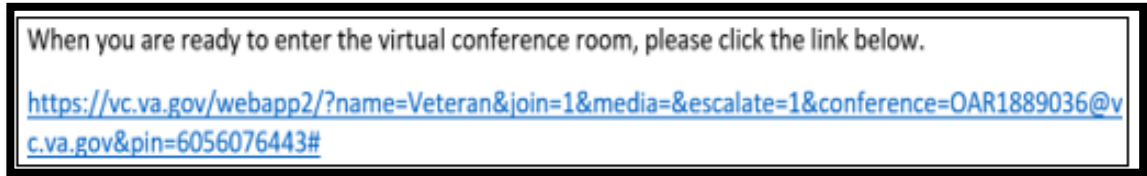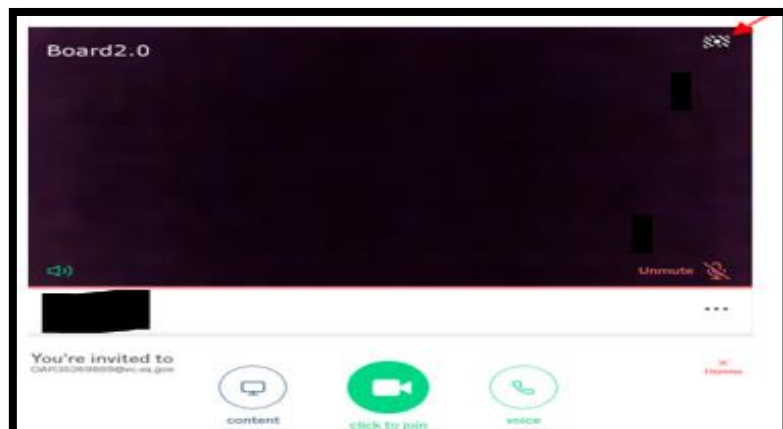
Video Functionality

Below is an example of what the hearing view will look like on camera.

Note: The conference host can deselect the video function and will be allowed to conduct the meeting using audio only.
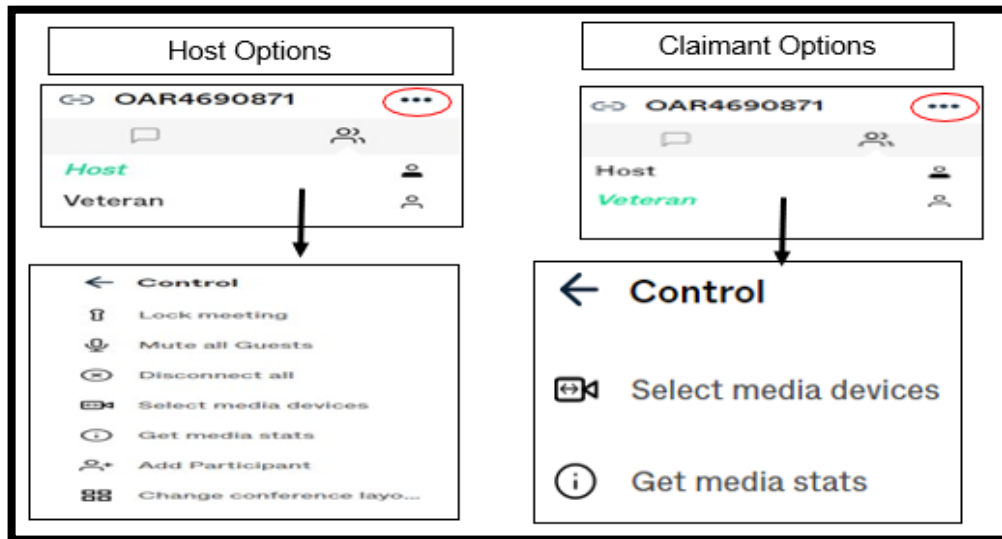

Blurred Background

The "on/off" for the video conference blurred background feature is in the top right corner of the screen (as shown in image).

When using video, the video options for the Host and Claimant/Representative can be accessed by clicking the three dots that appear in the top right corner (See image below).

2.4 Modify Appointments: View, Edit, Cancel, and Mark as No-show in the Caregility Scheduler

View Appointments: To review appointments, select "Appointments" to view your scheduled appointments. Then, check the box to the left as shown below or click on the specific date and time of the record you wish to open and view.
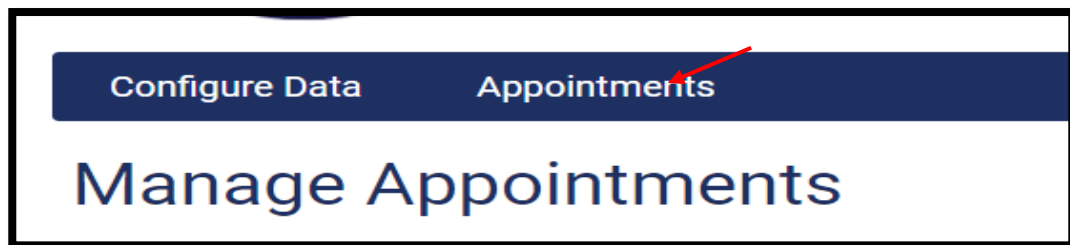
Edit appointment: To edit or resend a scheduled appointment, select the ""Appointment" tab, on the appointment management page. Select the "Date & Time" for the record you want to open (as shown in the image below). Then select "Save" and an auto-generated email notification will be sent to the conference host and the claimant and/or representative.

Cancel appointment: To cancel or mark an appointment as no show, select "No Show" or "Cancel" located in the bottom right corner of the page (as shown in the image below).
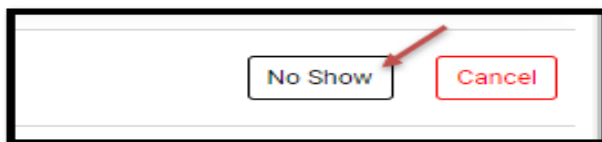

To confirm that an auto-generated email was issued to the claimant and/or representative, go to the "Appointment Details**"** section, and click on "Emails" and then click on the link. The Conference Host or scheduler will be able to confirm if the email was delivered (see image below). If the email was delivered, the email status for the initial, no show, cancel, and reminder will show "Delivered" along with the date and time.
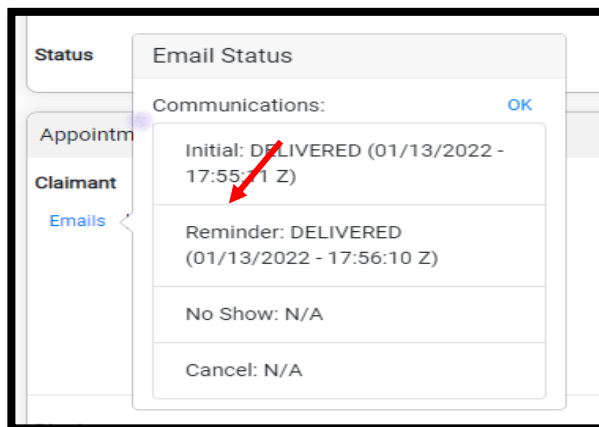
To add a participant to the conference, select conference in the "Appointment Details" section to copy and share the URL via email as shown in the image.
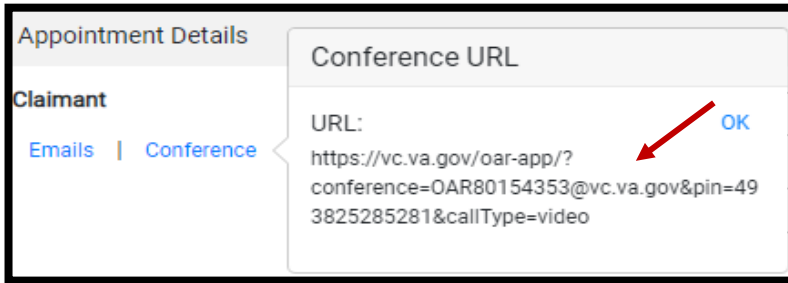
No show: All users with access level to modify the appointment will see the "No Show" button at the bottom of the "Manage Appointment" page. The user may click the "No Show" button, which will load the "No Show Confirmation" page.

2.5 Export Appointment Data

The "Manage Appointment" page offers the "Export" button, which allows current appointment list results to be exported to a CSV (comma separated values) file. To export, select the "Export" icon, the browser will either ask where to save the CSV file or it will automatically be downloaded to the default location on the laptop/computer. An Excel spreadsheet will then appear as the file name you saved.
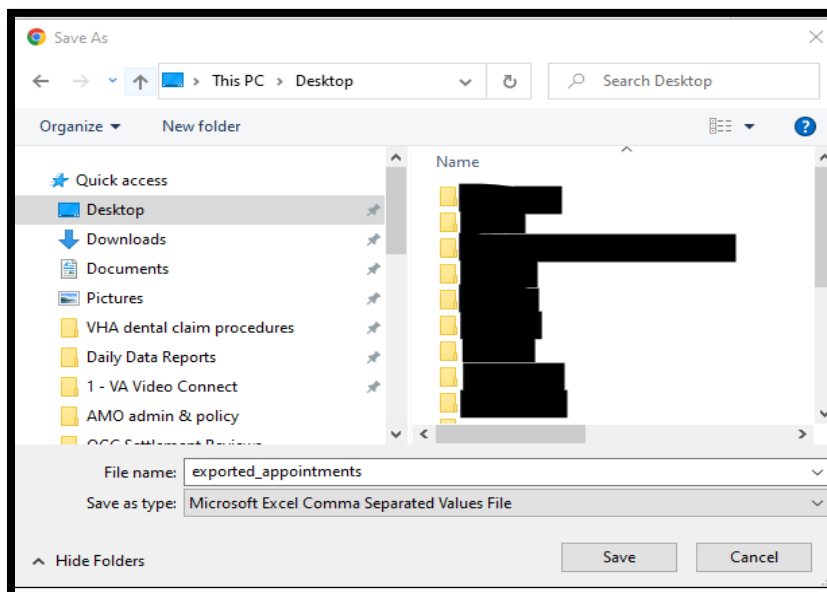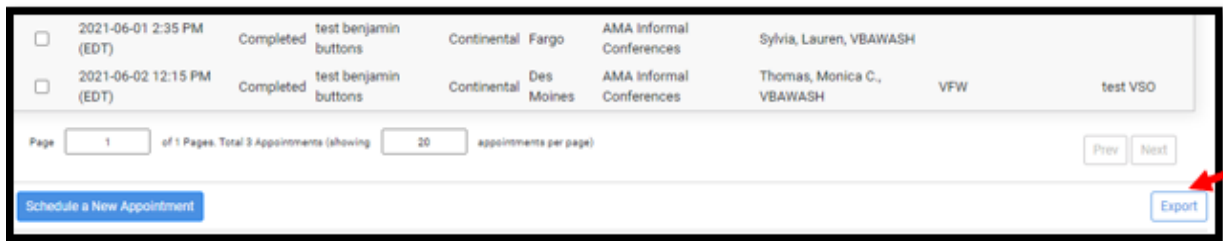
To Conduct a Search by Date:
- From the "Appointments" page, select the tab "Search by Date"
- Determine the "from" and "to" date and enter in the mm/dd/yyyy format
- You can also select the calendar and input the date.
- When entering the "to" date, it is best to enter the day after. This will ensure the query search captures all dates in the search criteria. For instance, if you want to search for date 06/23/2022, you should enter 06/24/2022.

To conduct a Search by Query:
- From the "Appointments" page, select the tab "Search by Query"
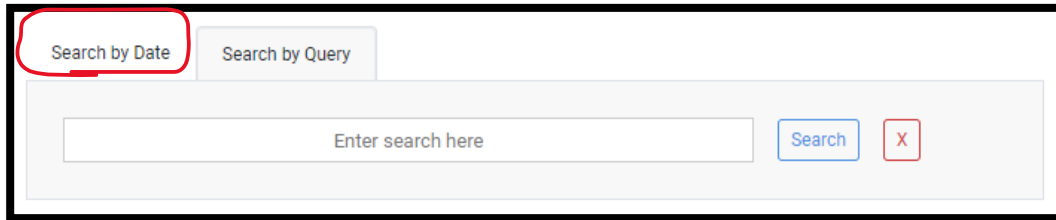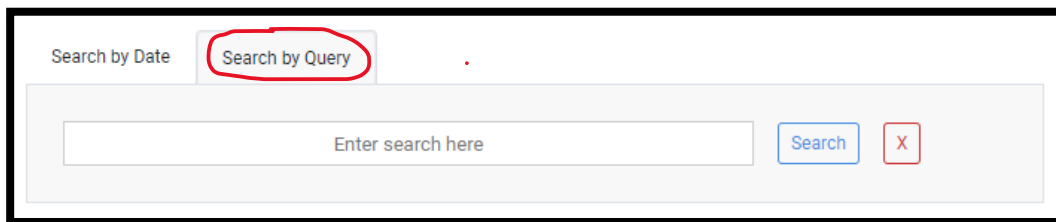- A "free text" search to be done by claimant name, district, office, service, host, or representative
- Once you have typed the query name, select the "Search" icon
- To clear the search text, click on the "X" button

2.6 Uploading Supporting Documents

The host, claimant, or accredited representative can upload documents during the meeting in VAVC. To start, select the "Presentation Files" icon. Next, select a document from the saved file location on the computer. Select the record, then double click on the file or select the "Open" tab and the file will be shared with the participants of the informal conference. Once the presentation screen appears, select "Present" to share with meeting participants. The records presented will not be permanently stored in VAVC.

Please ensure that all records shared during the informal conference are also uploaded into the claimant's VBMS file.
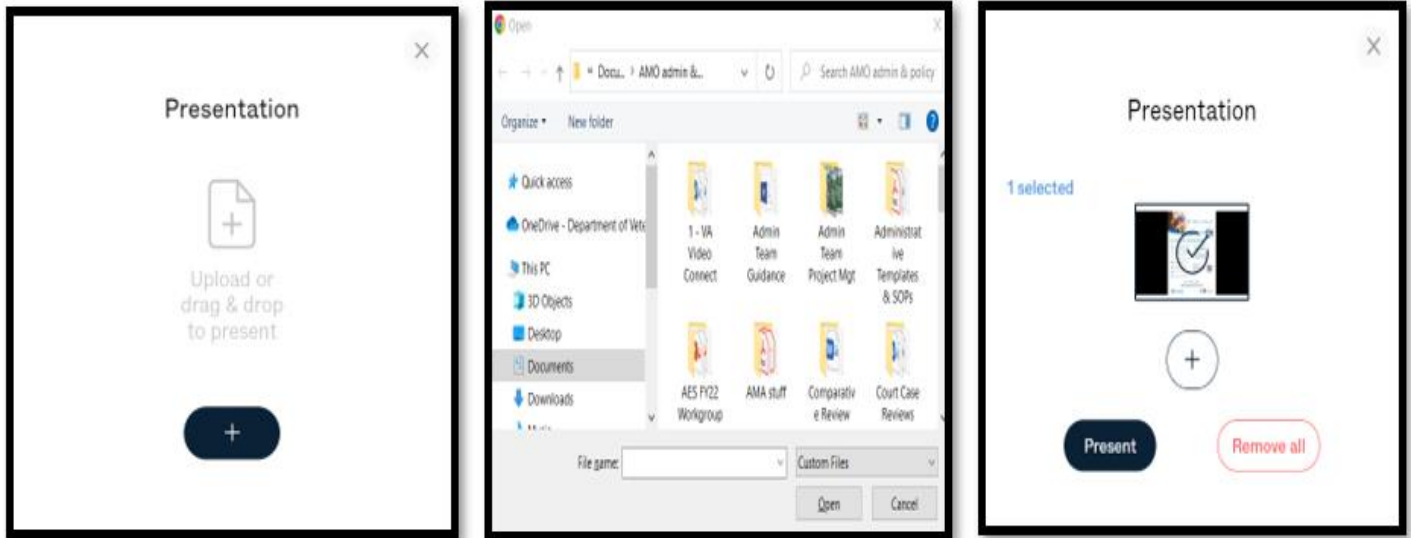
2.7 Conclude the Informal Conference

To exit the meeting, the conference host will click the red "Disconnect" button in the pop-up window.
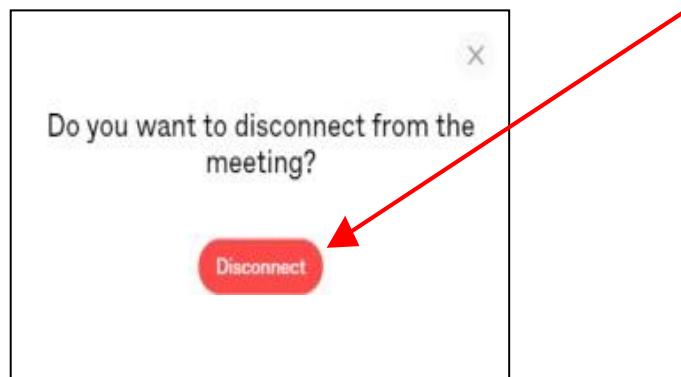
CONGRATULATIONS!

You have successfully concluded your virtual conference!

2.8 Troubleshooting

If there are technical issues with the VAVC application, contact the National Telehealth Technology HelpDesk (NTTHD) at (855) 519-7116 for additional technical support.

For questions regarding VAVC, please contact OAR Program Administration at oaradmin.vbawas@va.gov.

Appendix A

VAVC Scheduler Generated Emails and Alerts

The VAVC scheduler generated emails and alerts are sent to the Conference Host, Claimant, and/or Accredited Representatives. The sample email notifications in Appendix A consists of the initial and rescheduled, canceled, no-show, and reminder email notifications.

Example 1: Initial Email Notification

Dear VA User,

This email confirms your upcoming **virtual video conference** with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). You are receiving this email based on your request for an informal conference or hearing for your pending claim with VBA. Please use the below link to join your conference at the appointed time. We recommend that you have your VBA decision document and notification letter to refer to during the video conference.

Claimant name: **Mickey Mouse**

Your **virtual video conference** will be held with a **claim reviewer** at 10:55 AM [America/New_York] on 09/16/2022. If you have questions or are unable to make the scheduled appointment, please contact VA's National Call Center (NCC) at 1-800-827-1000 for further assistance.

Your Virtual Video Conference Link

Click the link to join the Virtual Video Conference: https://vc.va.gov/oar-app/?conference=OAR70202893@vc.va.gov&pin=04404732&callType=video . Please allow up to 10 minutes for the host to join.

1. Once you click on the link above, enter the name you want to appear in the conference.
2. Once you see this message: "vc.va.gov would like to access the microphone and camera", please select **"Allow"**
3. Select the video or audio image to enter the private conference.
4. Wait for the conference host to begin.

Are you having technical issues? You may contact the National Telehealth Technology HelpDesk (NTTHD) at (855) 519-7116 for additional technical support.

Click here to test your device prior to the appointment to check connectivity.

BCID: [1234]

Example 2: Rescheduled Email Notification

Dear VA User,

This email confirms your upcoming **virtual video conference** with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). You are receiving this email based on your request for an informal conference or hearing for your pending claim with VBA. Please use the below link to join your conference at the appointed time. We recommend that you have your VBA decision document and notification letter to refer to during the video conference.

Claimant name: **Mickey Mouse**

Your **virtual video conference** will be held with a **claim reviewer** at 10:55 AM [America/New_York] on 09/16/2022. If you have questions or are unable to make the scheduled appointment, please contact VA's National Call Center (NCC) at 1-800-827-1000 for further assistance.

Your Virtual Video Conference Link

Click the link to join the Virtual Video Conference: https://vc.va.gov/oar-app/?conference=OAR70202893@vc.va.gov&pin=04404732&callType=video . Please allow up to 10 minutes for the host to join.

1. Once you click on the link above, enter the name you want to appear in the conference.
2. Once you see this message: "vc.va.gov would like to access the microphone and camera", please select **"Allow"**
3. Select the video or audio image to enter the private conference.
4. Wait for the conference host to begin.

Are you having technical issues? You may contact the National Telehealth Technology HelpDesk (NTTHD) at (855) 519-7116 for additional technical support.

Click here to test your device prior to the appointment to check connectivity.

BCID: [1234]

Example 3: Canceled email notification

Dear VA Conference Host,

Your upcoming **virtual video conference** appointment scheduled with a **claim reviewer** at 08:30 AM [America/New_York] on 09/30/2022 has been canceled.

Claimant name: **Mickey Mouse**

If you have questions, please contact VA's National Call Center (NCC) at 1-800-827-1000 for further assistance.

BCID: [1234]

Example 4: No-show email notification

Dear (VA Conference Host name),

This is not an appointment notification.

This e-mail message confirms the claimant and/or representative did not report to the scheduled **virtual video conference**. A **virtual video conference** was scheduled based on the claimant's request for an informal conference or hearing for your pending claim with VBA.

Claimant name: **Mickey Mouse**

The **virtual video conference** was scheduled with a **claim reviewer** at 02:00 PM [America/New_York] on 09/16/2022.

If you have questions, please contact VA's National Call Center (NCC) at 1-800-827-1000 for further assistance.

BCID: [1234]

Example 5: Reminder Email Notification - 24 Hours Prior to the Conference

An auto-generated reminder email is sent to the conference host, claimant, and/or representative, if applicable, 24-hours prior to the appointment.

Dear Test Benjamin Buttons,

Your upcoming **virtual video conference** appointment scheduled with **Test Host, Conference, VBAWASH** at 10:00 AM [America/New_York] on 06/07/2021 has been canceled.

If you have questions about your **virtual video conference**, please contact the National Call Center (NCC) at 1—800-827-1000 for further assistance.