



Pension and Fiduciary Service (P&F)

Pension Quality Call

Date: January 31, 2024

TMS: # VA 4654745

AGENDA TOPICS

- [ITEM 1: STAR ERROR TRENDS](#)
- [ITEM 2: PACT ACT UPDATES](#)
- [ITEM 3: FEDERAL TAX INFORMATION \(FTI\) INCIDENT REPORTING UPDATE](#)
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AGENDA ITEMS

Agenda item: STAR Error Trends **Presenter:** Jennifer Kunkel, Analyst

Target Audience:
QRT and Management

Discussion:

A trend analysis was conducted on the errors cited on National STAR Pension Quality Reviews completed between the months of **November 2023 and December 2023** (transactions completed between August 1, 2023, and September 30, 2023). STAR reviews are performed the following month after a claim is completed.

Review Month	Review Category	Total Reviewed	Total # of Errors	# Claims in Error	BE Errors	Recons Submitted	BE Accuracy %
Nov.	Authorization	24	10	7	3	1	87.50%
	Rating	14	4	4	1	0	92.86%
	Total	38	14	11	4	1	
Dec.	Authorization	24	6	3	0	0	100%
	Rating	14	2	2	0	1	100%
	Total	38	8	5	0	1	

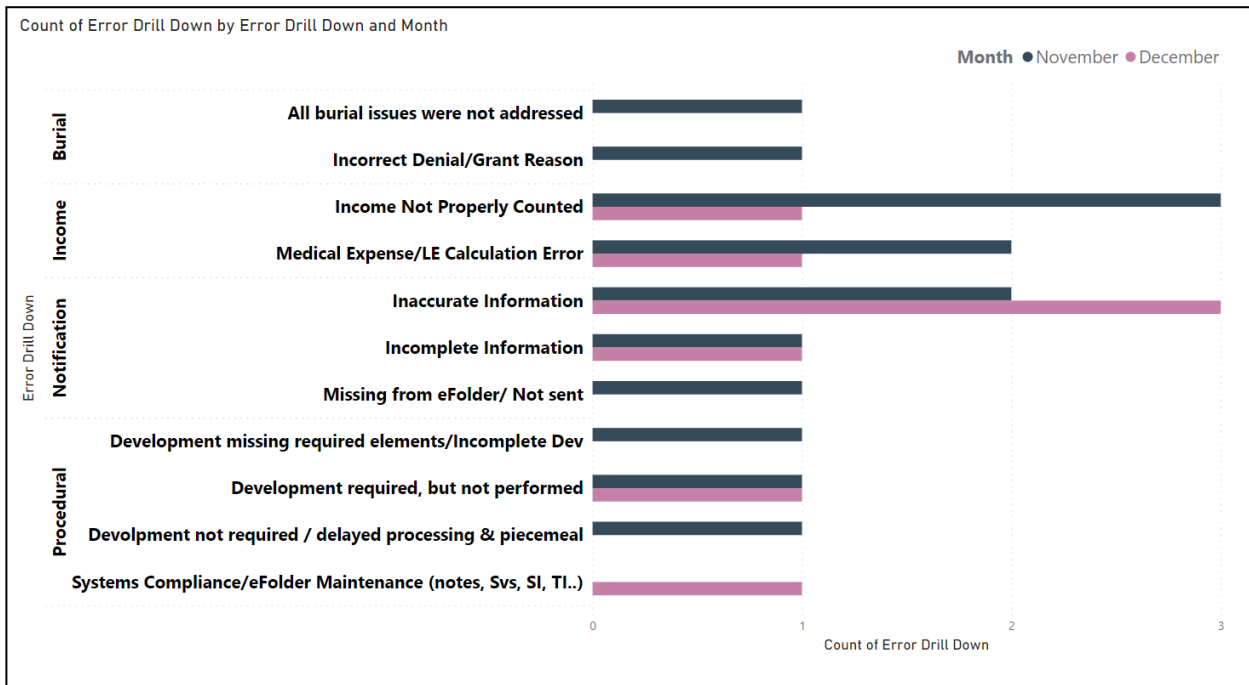
Out of a total of **76** claims reviewed for quality, **16** claims had **22** errors cited; **4** of those claims had BE errors.

2 reconsiderations (recons) were submitted. One was on a non-BE error that was upheld, while the other is still under review.

The 22 cited errors were within the following categories:

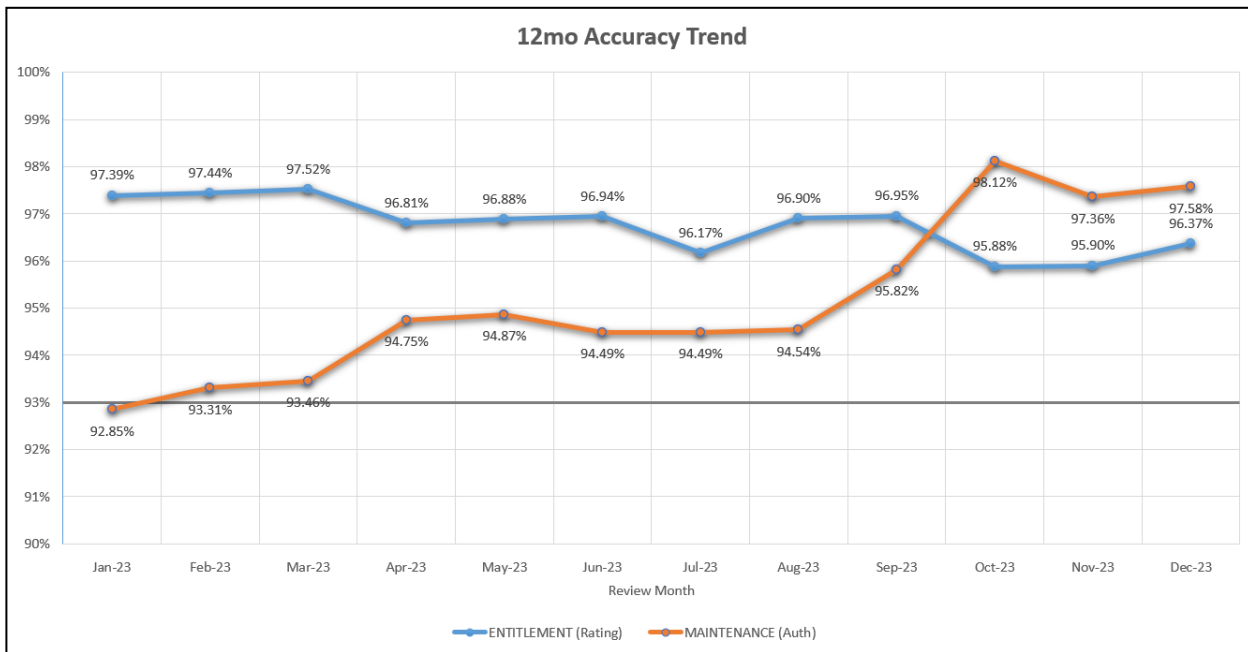
November Reviews		December Reviews	
BE	Non-BE	BE	Non-BE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Burial • 3 – Income • 1 – procedural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – burial • 2 – income • 4 – notification • 2 – procedural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 – income • 4 – notification • 2 – procedural

The *Error Drill Down* graph below details the errors by category/reasons:



Notification continues to be the highest area of errors. Please continue to include all appropriate attachments and review all letters for accuracy before releasing. These reviews also showed a dramatic increase in income counting inaccuracies. Please remind your VSRs to be careful of medical expense calculations, income counting rules and effective dates when counting income and expenses.

The graph below shows accuracy over the last year, January 2023 through December 2023 (transactions between December 1, 2022, through November 30, 2023).



Authorization quality has improved greatly over the year. Great job, keep up the good work!

FY24 STAR Sample Size

Beginning with the February 2024 STAR reviews (claims completed in January 2024), the monthly STAR sample size will increase from 38 per month to 47. Rating reviews increased from 14 to 22 reviews per month and Authorization reviews increased from 24 to 25 reviews per month. PA&I calculates sample sizes using the results of national performance from the previous 2 years.

References/Contacts

- ✓ STAR Reports https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/star/reports/star_rpts20.htm
- ✓ Pension STAR Dashboard [Pension STAR Dashboard | Salesforce](#)

Agenda item: PACT Act Updates

Presenter: Jennifer Kunkel,
Analyst

Target Audience:
QRT and Management

Discussion:

Recent Key-Releases and events:

- September 8, 2023 – SOP v4 released. Latest updates. (Reminder)

SOP Reminders:

- Most of the Q&As were incorporated to the v4 SOP, conflicting guidance should favor the most recent guidance.

PACT SI (Reminder):

On November 21, 2023, P&F released guidance advising claims processors about a new special issue (SI) in VBMS. **PACT SC Death** SI has been added into VBMS Core in anticipation of implementing a future VBMS-R special issue for use by RVSRs. The “**PACT SC Death**” SI in VBMS Core should not be used on PACT cases. Instead, please continue using “PACT” or “PACT ACT DIC Reevaluation”. The “PACT” and “PACT ACT DIC Reevaluation” special issues are used for tracking purposes and are required, as applicable, on all PACT cases. The **PACT SC Death** VBMS Core Special Issue is a placeholder until such a time that it is made available in VBMS-R; after a future system update it will be removed from VBMS Core.

PACT SFR:

The follow up SFR has begun. P&F is currently reviewing cases completed between October 9, 2023, through December 31, 2023. The SFR will conclude at the end of February 2024.

References/Contacts

- ✓ PMC Intranet Site [PACT Act - Pension and Fiduciary Service \(va.gov\)](#)
- ✓ Questions [Field Inquiry Tool](#) (FIT).

Agenda item: FTI Incident Reporting Update

Presenter: Shannon Hunsicker,
Analyst

Target Audience:
QRT and Management

Discussion:

Please note the FTI incident report policy and reporting procedures under [M21-1, Part XIV, 4.B.1.m](#) is currently under major revision. The 24-hour notification remains effective; however, the IRS has removed the requirement to notify TIGTA before notification to the Office of Safeguards. Please report improper inspection or disclosure of FTI, including data breaches, data incidents, and information spillage, only to the IRS Office of Safeguards at SafeguardReports@irs.gov. The IRS will update Publication 1075, Publication 4761, and other data incident resources on IRS.gov (e.g., webpages and training videos) to remove TIGTA’s

contact information and the requirements to contact TIGTA. Until that time, agencies should disregard mentions of TIGTA reporting requirements

Agenda item: Field Inquiries

Presenter: Shannon Hunsicker,
Analyst

Target Audience:
QRT and Management

Discussion:

Milwaukee PMC:

Question: We have noticed that the following Error Correction Name is pending in our PMC's "Pension National Open Errors" inventory in QMS: NP1030SFR Error Correction. However, we have not received communication/guidance on how to proceed with these SFRs. Our understanding is that this was for an SFR on claims affected by the SSA Income verification match. When can we expect guidance on handling these SFRs?

P&F Response: P&F is completing a Special Focus Review (SFR) on SSA Income Match. As a result of these reviews, some claims need corrections by the Milwaukee and St. Paul PMCs. The cases that needed corrective action are being routed to the respective stations. Please look for those cases under the review name: NP1030SFR.

As of this call, the full review is not yet complete. P&F will provide the findings when all reviews are complete.

Question: Regarding the recent Updated Dependency Electronic Submission Failure SOP (disseminated by OFO via email dated 12/11/23), the Milwaukee PMC has questions on whether the guidance contained within the SOP impacts non-dependency electronic submission failure claims, i.e., all other claims.

- 1) Does the 38 U.S. Code § 5302B (Prohibition of debt arising from overpayment due to delay in processing), included in the Dependency Electronic Submission Failure SOP (broken out in the bullet below) affect the PMCs for all other delayed claims, and if so, how?
 - a) "Recently enacted 38 U.S.C. § 5302B states that no individual may incur a debt that arises from participation in a program or benefit administered by VBA and is attributable to the failure of an employee to process information provided by, or on behalf of that individual, within applicable timeliness standards established by the Secretary."

For example, when a Veteran tells us they have a dependency change or start to receive Social Security benefits and it is not worked "timely" for whatever reason (e.g., no EP established) and the PMC eventually discovers the issue and addresses it, our policy is to say we have first party evidence, and we create the overpayment. The beneficiary may receive a waiver if they request one, but based on 38 U.S.C. § 5302B, should the PMCs be doing administrative decisions so as not to recoup a debt?

Generally speaking, if we have first party evidence of record (e.g., in VBMS) that has not been addressed and creates an adverse action, should we be handling these situations with an administrative decision so as not to recoup the debt?

- 2) If 38 U.S. Code § 5302B (Prohibition of debt arising from overpayment due to delay in processing) included in the Dependency Electronic Submission Failure SOP affects us for other delayed claims, please quantify what the “timeliness standard” is. We are unsure how we can prevent delays with claims processing since NWQ dictates the workload for the claims in our inventory.

P&F Response: Currently, P&F is in collaboration with other business lines to provide procedural guidance on the impacts of 38 U.S.C. §5302B and claims processing. Current guidance is still in effect for claims processing issues. Please refer to [M21-1, Part VI, Subpart i, 2.B.3.d](#) for the current policy on claims processing delays. When the updated guidance is finalized related to 38 U.S.C. §5302B and the timeliness standards, the PMCs will be notified.

Please note, based on NWQ’s e-mail of November 2, 2023, PMCs should not process any SSA Match related EPs (i.e., EP150 PMC-Soc Sec Admin Match or EP600 PMC-SSA Match) and any Non-Rating EP pending concurrently with those EPs until further notice.

Closing Comments

P&F Quality Call Topics:

We will solicit for agenda topic(s) for each future Quality Call. If you have a specific topic suggestion, please feel free to email it to the Pension and Fiduciary (P&F) Quality mailbox at PFTNGQUALOVRST.VBACO@va.gov. For specific policy and procedures related topics, please send inquiries through the [P&F Service Field Inquiry Tool \(FIT\)](#).

Quality Call Bulletins

Quality Call Bulletins can be found within TMS along with call recordings. Once the monthly bulletin is finalized, information will be sent to the PMCs and Fiduciary Hubs which will include the TMS #.

The next Quality Call is tentatively scheduled for March 2024.