



Department of

**Veterans Services**

# Lessons Learned from Quality Review

# Agenda

- What Is TDVS's Quality Review Program
- Why conduct Quality Review
- Process
- Lessons Learned
- Questions

# What Is TDVS's Quality Review Program

- Primary Purpose
  - Identify Errors and Omissions in Applications for Benefits That Could Negatively Impact Veteran or Claimant
- Secondary Purpose
  - Identify Trends in Errors or Omissions In Order To Strategically Tailor Learning and Development Opportunities

# Why Conduct Quality Review

- Why
  - Legal Responsibility of Recognized State Organizations
    - Take affirmative action, including training and monitoring of accredited representatives, to ensure proper handling of claims. (38 C.F.R. 14.628 (d)(v))
  - Present the Strongest Possible Claim for Benefits
  - Strengthen Advocacy of TDVS Employees and County Service Officer Partners

# Organization

- Personnel
  - Local Team
    - Quality & Appeals Specialist 2, Three Quality & Appeals Specialist 1s, and Administrative Services Assistant 1
  - Regional Directors
  - Training Officer
- Functions
  - Local Team
    - Quality Review and Claims Filing
    - Specialized Advice and Guidance for Customers
  - Regional Directors
    - Hands On Assistance / Mentoring
  - Training Officer
    - Curriculum Development
    - Training and Mentoring

# Process

- Quality and Appeals Specialists Review Forms and Documents
- Error or Omission – Negative Impact to Veteran or Claimant = Regional Director Engagement; Correction Before Filing
  - Examples
    - Act or Omission Prevents VA From Establishing Claim
      - Failure to Sign an Application
      - Failure to Use a Standard Form
    - Act or Omission Contrary to Law or Policy
      - Filing an Application for Benefits Without POA
    - Act or Omission That Prevents VA From Taking Action
      - Request to Expedite Without Evidence

# Process Continued

- Error or Omission – Not Best Practice = TDVS Quality Review Log
  - Examples
    - Act or Omission That Delays VA Action
      - Incomplete Application That Requires Further Development
    - Act or Omission That Prevents Digital Filing
      - Failure to Complete Required Blocks on Forms
      - Failure to Properly Complete a Veteran’s VetraSpec Profile
        - » Not Including Date of Birth
        - » Upload Documents in .pdf Format

# Lessons Learned

- The Basics
  - Representation
  - Establishing Service Connection (Remember the Elements)
  - Lead VA to the Outcome
- Other
  - Modernized Appellate System
  - Electronic Filing With Digits to Digits



# Lessons Learned

- TDVS Benefits Bulletin
- Tools and Fact Sheets
  - Which Form to Use



## Appeals Modernization TDVS Guidance\_v2, July 23, 2019

The *Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017* or AMA changed VA's claims and appeals processes and decision notification requirements and took effect February 19, 2019.

### Which Form Should You Use

#### Filing a Claim

Initial Claim for Service Connection	VA Form 21-526EZ
Increased Evaluation	VA Form 21-526EZ
A Claim for a Permanent and Total Rating	VA Form 21-526EZ

\*\*[Supplemental Claim] VA notified the claimant of the decision (denying service connection) more than one year ago and you have new and relevant evidence for VA to consider. VA Form 20-0995

#### Disagreeing with a VA Decision

VA notified you of the decision before February 19, 2019 VA Form 21-0958

(Supplemental Claim) A supplemental claim can be filed on a decision issued before or after February 19, 2019 when you have new and relevant evidence for VA to consider. VA Form 20-0995

(Higher Level Review) VA notified the claimant of the decision on or after February 19, 2019, and you have no new evidence for VA to consider and want to have the decision reviewed by a VA employee. VA Form 20-0996

(Board Appeal) VA notified the claimant of the decision on or after February 19, 2019, and you want to have the decision reviewed by the Board of Veterans' Appeals. VA Form 10182

#### Disagreeing with a Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP) Decision

VA notified the claimant of the decision made through RAMP either before or after February 19, 2019, and you want to have the decision reviewed or disagree with the decision. AMA Forms - VA Form 20-0995; VA Form 20-0996; VA Form 10182

#### Opting In to the AMA

VA provided the claimant with a Statement of the Case (SOC) or Supplemental Statement of the Case (SSOC) and the appellate filing deadline has not expired. AMA Forms - VA Form 20-0995; VA Form 20-0996; VA Form 10182

\*\*The Supplemental Claim replaces reconsiderations and reopening claims with new and material evidence even when the VA notified the claimant of the decision prior to February 19, 2019.



## TDVS Benefits Bulletin 19-1

[TDVS Updates](#)  
[VA and Veteran Benefit Updates](#)  
[Quality Review Insights](#)  
[Practice Like a Pro](#)

### TDVS Updates

#### Ground Breaking for Bradley County State Veterans Home

On Wednesday, August 21, 2019 Governor Lee [broke ground](#) with Federal, State and Local partners on the Bradley county State Veterans Home. Tennessee has four State Veteran Homes that provide long term skilled nursing care for veterans, veteran spouses and Gold Star parents. Additional information on eligibility and payment can be found on the [Tennessee State Veterans Homes](#) website.

#### TDVS Partnership with the National Veterans Legal Services Program

The Tennessee Department of Veterans Services (TDVS) is proud to announce a new partnership with the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSPP). This partnership will greatly enhance the scope of appellate advocacy that TDVS is able to provide to Tennessee veterans through a review of adverse decisions issued by the Board of Veterans' Appeals in order to determine if there is an appealable error and provide no cost representation at the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. See the enclosed [August 27, 2019 Fact Sheet, TDVS Partnership with the National Veterans Legal Services Program](#), for additional details.

#### VA and Veteran Benefit Updates

#### Student Loan Forgiveness for Disabled Veterans

On Wednesday, August 21, 2019 President Trump signed a [Memorandum](#) that would remove bureaucratic barriers for permanently disabled veterans to qualify for student loan forgiveness. Veterans with a total and permanent service connected disability may qualify for a discharge of certain federal student loans. Additional information on eligibility and how to apply can be found on the Department of Education's Federal Student Aid [website](#).

#### Quality Review Insights

# Questions

## Questions

Appeals Division Contact Information

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TDVS Office Information