Automated Decision Support & Veteran Service Officers (FAQ)

Q: What is Automated Decision Support (ADS?

A: The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA is undergoing business modernization efforts designed to leverage technology to provide customer-centric benefits delivery to Veterans and beneficiaries. As part of this modernization, VBA is automating administrative tasks and workflow—known as ADS. The goal of ADS technology is to improve timeliness and efficiency of the existing claims process and prevent future claims backlog. This technology will result in faster, more accurate, and consistent decisions for Veterans and their beneficiaries—ultimately improving the VA customer service.

Q: Is ADS end-to-end automation?

A: No. ADS provides users decision-support tools to assist with claim development tasks. When a claim is established with automation-eligible contentions, automation logic is run to generate an Automated Review Summary Document (ARSD) and order an examination or generate a draft examination request. Claim Processors still must take manual action to validate the claim, review the eFolder, and make a final decision on the claim.

Q: How do I know if a claim has been impacted by ADS?

A: Once an eligible contention has been processed through automated technology, an Automated Review Summary Document (ARSD) will be available in the VBMS eFolder. The ARSD will detail the contentions impacted by ADS. Additionally, Automated Issue Management functionality in VBMS provides an detailed history of actions taken on claims at the contention level.

Q: What is Automated Issue Management (AIM) and how does it assist me as a VSO?

A: AIM allows the processing and tracking of individual contentions while mantaining a relationship to the Veteran's claim. A new contention history screen is available in VBMS that includes information about the **results of automation** as well as individual contention updates that occur. Users can navigate to this from the contention screen to see the result of automation for each individual contention.

Q: What is the ARSD?

A: The ARSD is a tool used to identify documents in the Veteran's eFolder to support claims processors in their review. The ARSD extracts relevant key data terms from specific document types within the eFolder and other data sources to provide a summary or findings and relevant information. Information includes military service locations, scheduler evidence, and other medical evidence with corresponding document ID and page number.

Q: How does ADS impact my VSO service to Veterans?

A: Largely, ADS does not impact the great service you provide to Veterans, as a VSO. If you have access to VBMS, you may see the ARSD within certain Veteran eFolders. You can view the ARSD to review what evidence the automated technology located and presented to VBA claims processors. The ARSD may serve as a time savings to you, as a VSO, if you are attempting to locate specific medical or military service information within the Veteran's VBMS eFolder.

Q: What is the benefit of ADS for Veterans and their family members?

A: This technology will result in faster, more accurate, and consistent decisions for Veterans and their beneficiaries—ultimately improving the VA customer service.

Q: What should I do if I have additional questions on ADS?

A: Questions related to ADS, or ADS claims status, can be forwarded to your local Regional Office, as normal.