Digital Filing and VBA's Mail Modernization
Summary of Major Issues
February 2021

Major Issues Impacting Digital Filing

- Military Service Information. Section V of the 21-526EZ requires information about a veteran's military service. Much of the information in blocks 18A. to 23B. is required to successfully file using D2D. Some digital filing tips related to military service include:
    - VetraSpec has annotated blocks 20C through 23B in red text to assist users in properly completing military service information.
    - The National Guard and Reserve addresses are limited to 20 characters.
    - Military Service information can be entered in the "Military Service" tab of VetraSpec in order to auto-populate 21-526Ezs. Select the "Military Service" button from VetraSpec's menu and either "Add New" or "Edit this Record" to add or edit a veteran's military service information.

- Data Validation Error: Address of Claimant.
    - The D2D program has implemented a city, state, and zip code validation. We suspect some of these errors are the result of a city name being spelled incorrectly or shortened. Because the city, state and zip code validation are based on USPS, if USPS does not shorten the name of a city (for example Mt. Juliet vs. Mount Juliet or Mt. Home vs. Mountain Home), we are seeing errors and not able to successfully transmit using D2D.
    - A couple of recommendations to help reduce this data validation error.
        - Spell out the entire city name in the VetraSpec database for subsequent form population.
        - Always include a city, state and zip code in the VetraSpec database.
        - Use usps.com "look up a zip code" to validate addresses.

Background on Digital Filing and Supporting VBA's Mail Automation Efforts

The Appeals Division provides quality review feedback that negatively impacts the Departments ability to file claims and associated materials digitally. Much of this feedback is

also applicable to how TDVS can better support VBA's mail automation efforts.

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is working to automate its mail processes in order to provide faster claims processing for veterans and claimants. In support of this effort VBA identified concrete actions VSOs can take to support faster claims processing:

- Use Electronic Filing
    - TDVS is already supporting this effort by using Digits-to-Digits or Direct Submit for nearly all claims and compensation mail filed through the Appeals Division.
- Double Check Form Completion
    - TDVS is already supporting this effort though it's quality review program. We have frequently identified and shared information to support form completion and successful electronic filing.
    - VBA has requested service organizations take the following efforts to speed the delivery of benefits: VBA receives many forms that are incomplete and without signature - this delays claims processing
        - Submit legible, quality documents
        - Ensure all checkboxes are completely filled-in
        - If information is not applicable, leave the field blank; do not use "N/A"
        - Do not use acronyms for Veterans Service Organization names or claimed disabilities
        - Keep handwritten notes clear with BLOCK letters written in dark ink
        - Sign and date forms clearly with dark ink

Digits to Digits (D2D) program remains the Appeals Division's preferred method to file eligible forms, which include the VA Form 21-22, VA Form 21-0966 and VA Form 21-526EZ. Tips to help ensure the forms you generate are D2D eligible can be found here - Digits to Digits and Digital Filing Fact Sheet