

Medical Disability Exam Program Office COVID-19 related guidance

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, there are instances when the MDE vendors are unable to complete all or part of the examination request. In some cases, claimants are asking to cancel or postpone scheduling their examination appointments because of social distancing practices. The MDE Program Office is working closely with the MDE contract vendors to track all canceled or pending examinations to include any overseas examinations.

As an alternative to a Veteran/Servicemember reporting to an in-person examination, claim processors will focus on identifying claims where the record contains sufficient medical evidence necessary to render a decision or use the Acceptable Clinical Evidence (ACE) process per M21-1MR III.iv.3.A.4.b.

When requesting an examination in VBMS, we are asking claims processors **not** to select that the “Veteran Must Report to the exam” box within the Examination Management System (EMS) **unless** it is explicitly defined in M21-1MR.III.iv.3.a.4.b. that the ACE process is prohibited.

If a Veteran or Servicemember refuses or is otherwise unable to attend an examination, MDE vendors have been instructed to follow their established scheduling processes by notifying the Veteran of any future or rescheduled appointments. The Veteran or Servicemember will then have the opportunity to contact the appropriate vendor and request the appointment be scheduled at a later date.

When normal scheduling procedures resume, VBA MDE vendors will begin scheduling based on priority processing requirements first, and then all remaining appointments.

VHA C&P EXAMINATION CAPACITY

We continue to work with our VHA partners to have them update their local VAMC C&P clinic capabilities in CAPRI through the deactivation of the DBQ types that are no longer available at their clinics, which in turn reflects in our systems.

If a Veteran or Servicemember’s examination has been cancelled by a VHA facility due to COVID-19, VBA claims processors will route a new examination request through EMS to the MDE vendors.

REQUEST TO CANCEL EXAMINATIONS

VBA has directed MDE vendors **not** to cancel examinations requests due to COVID-19. All MDE vendors have been instructed to only cancel appointments, as necessary, with individual Veterans and Servicemembers and then hold the Exam Scheduling Request (ESR) in their system until the appointment can be conducted.