#### Department of Veterans Affairs M21-1, Part III, Subpart i

**Veterans Benefits Administration August 6, 2015**

**Washington, DC 20420**

#### Transmittal Sheet

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| Changes Included in This Revision | The table below describes the changes included in this revision of Veterans Benefits Manual M21-1, Part III, “General Claims Process,” Subpart i, “Overview of Claims Processing and Structure of the Veterans Service Center.”  ***Notes***: Minor editorial changes have been made to   * update incorrect or obsolete hyperlink references * update obsolete terminology, where appropriate * remove references to specific claims-processing systems, where doing so does not affect the clarity of the instructions or information provided * renumber each topic based on the standard that the first topic in each section is Topic 1 * reassign alphabetical designations to individual blocks, where necessary, to account for new and/or deleted blocks within a topic * update section and topic titles to more accurately reflect their content, and * bring the documents into conformance with M21-1 standards. |

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| Reason(s) for the Change | Citation |
| * To add language specifically instructing regional offices (ROs) to apply the *Fully Developed Claim* (FDC)special issue indicator to at least one contention within the FDC claim when identifying a claim as an FDC. * To add a reference on establishing an EP in the appropriate system. * To remove procedures that only applied to paper claims folders. | M21-1, Part III, Supart i, Chapter 3, Section B, Topic 1, Block a (III.i.3.B.1.a) |
| To add a new Block b for paper claims folder FDC procedures. | III.i.3.B.1.b |
| To add a table to clarify the policies for excluding a claim from the FDC Program at claims establishment (CEST). | III.i.3.B.2.a |
| * To clarify when to exclude a claim from the FDC Program subsequent to CEST. * To add exceptions to the reasons for exclusion, where appropriate. | III.i.3.B.2.b |
| To add a new Block c providing the policy on submission of additional evidence in support of an FDC claim. | III.i.3.B.2.c |
| * To remove the list of special issue indicators andnotification text used for notifying a claimant of the reason(s) for exclusion as this information has been relocated to a new block. * To add a note that the notification of exclusion does not have to be sent when a claimant opts out of FDC processing. | III.i.3.B.2.d |
| To add a new Block e describing the updated special issue indicators for FDC exclusion and their corresponding required notification text. | III.i.3.B.2.e |
| To add a new Block f for procedures when a claim is erroneously excluded from the FDC Program. | III.i.3.B.2.f |
| To clarify what development VA will undertake in connection with an FDC claim. | III.i.3.B.3.a |
| To remove the requirement that ROs notify a claimant when an examination is requested. | III.i.3.B.3.c |
| To add a new Block d discussing the policy of FDCs and special issue development. | III.i.3.B.3.d |
| To add a new Block e discussing military sexual trauma (MST) protocol and FDCs. | III.i.3.B.3.e |
| To add a new Block f discussing Vet Center records and FDCs. | III.i.3.B.3.f |
| To add a new Block g with required language to be added to the follow-up development letter for special issue FDCs. | III.i.3.B.3.g |
| To add a new Block h for determining when to exclude a special issue claim from the FDC Program. | III.i.3.B.3.h |
| To add a new Block i for telephone development and FDC exclusion. | III.i.3.B.3.i |
| * To clarify the policy for assigning effective dates to FDC claims. * To add discussion of considering multiple effective date rules when assigning an effective date in an FDC claim. * To add a note explaining what is considered an original claim for compensation. | III.i.3.B.4.a |
| * To add intent to files (ITFs) to the discussion of *PL 112-154*, *Section 506*. * To clarify the evidence requirements when assigning retroactive effective dates under *PL 112-154*. * To clarify that informal claims apply under historical 38 CFR 3.155. | III.i.3.B.4.b |
| To add a new Block c for explaining the FDC effective date. | III.i.3.B.4.c |
| To revise the example. | III.i.3.B.4.e |
| To delete old Topic 8 discussing the requirement to notify the claimant that the claim was processed under the FDC Program as this procedure is no longer required. | -- |
| To clarify that the folder flash is for paper claims folders. | III.i.3.B.5 |

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| Rescissions | None |

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| Authority | By Direction of the Under Secretary for Benefits |

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| Signature | Thomas J. Murphy, Director  Compensation Service |

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