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

**Veterans Benefits Administration June 16, 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 iii, “General Development and Dependency Issues.”***Notes***: * The term “regional office” (RO) also includes pension management center (PMC), where appropriate.
* The term “Veterans Service Center Manager” (VSCM) also includes Pension Management Center Manager (PMCM), where appropriate.
* Unless otherwise noted, the term “claims folder” refers to the official, numbered, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) repository – whether paper or electronic – for all documentation relating to claims that a Veteran and/or his/her dependent(s) file with VA.
* Minor editorial changes have also been made to
* update incorrect or obsolete references
* update obsolete terminology, where appropriate
* 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
* clarify block labels and/or block text, and
* bring the document into conformance with M21-1 standards.
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| Reason(s) for the Change | Citation |
| To relocate guidance from M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, Chapter 2,Section I, Topic 57 (III.iii.2.I.57) that discuses the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA’s) responsibility to assist claimants in obtaining evidence to a new Topic 2.  | III.iii.1.C.2.a |
| To relocate guidance from III.iii.2.I.57 that informs the target audience the standard procedures for requesting records from a Federal entity.  | III.iii.1.C.2.b |
| To relocate guidance from III.iii.2.I.57 that list situations in which the standard procedure for requesting records from a Federal entity is not applicable.  | III.iii.1.C.2.c |
| To relocate guidance from III.iii.2.I.59 that identifies how the VA prepares a final notice to a claimant when the Veterans Affairs (VA) is unable to obtain relevant Federal records.  | III.iii.1.C.2.d |
| To relocate guidance from III.iii.2.I.59 that identifies information a final attempt letter must contain. | III.iii.1.C.2.e |
| To provide guidance that defines authorization forms required by a private health care provider (PHP).  | III.iii.1.C.3.a |
| To revise guidance that discusses *VA Forms 21-4142, General Release for Medical Provider Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA*), *and 21-4142a, General Release for Medical Provider Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA*)*.* | III.iii.1.C.3.b |
| To revise guidance that discusses the expiration of *VA Forms 21-4142* and *VA Form 21-4142a.* | III.iii.1.C.3.c |
| To incorporate guidance that discusses development actions related to *VA Form 21-4142* and *VA Form 21-4142a.* | III.iii.1.C.3.d |
| To delete old Block e as the information is outdated because the VA no longer request evidence from a private hospital or private physician | --- |
| To update general information about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). | III.iii.1.C.3.e |
| To delete old Block f as the information is outdated and has been replaced with the private medical records (PMR) program. | --- |
| To revise guidance that defines HIPAA’s impact on the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). | III.iii.1.C.3.f |
| To delete old Block g as the information has been replaced with new procedures identified in PMR standard operating procedure (SOP).  | --- |
| To relocate and revise guidance on how to request buddy statements when identified by the claimant. | III.iii.1.C.3.h |
| To delete old Block I as the information from III.iii.2.I was relocated to III.iii.1.C.  | --- |
| * To relocate guidance from old Topic 2 that advises the target audience when to
* use an electronic 10-7131, *Exchange of Beneficiary Information and Request for Administrative Action,* when requesting treatment records that are not retrievable through the Compensation and Pension Record Interchange (CAPRI).
* incorporate guidance on retrieving treatment records from Advanced Web Image Viewer (AWIV) regarding treatment received from a non-VA medical facility under a VA contract.
* incorporate guidance on contacting the contracted facility, if records in AWIV are not inclusive.
* incorporate guidance on checking CAPRI for any VA medical center (VAMC) treatment relevant to the claim, even when the claimant does not indicate treatment was received from a VAMC.
 | III.iii.1.C.4.a |
| To clarify that pertinent medical records in CAPRI must be uploaded to the claims folder via the Send to Virtual VA tool or the VBMS Upload Document function.  | III.iii.1.C.4.b |
| To relocate guidance from III.iii.2.I.59 that advises what action should be taken when the RO is unable to obtain relevant VAMC records.  | III.iii.1.C.4.c |
| To update the guidance on how to obtain Vet Center records.  | III.iii.1.C.4.d |
| * To incorporate guidance that explains the purpose of the private medical records (PMR) program.
* To add a reference that links the target audience to the PMR Retrieval Home Page and PMR SOP.
 | III.iii.1.C.5.a  |
| * To incorporate guidance that conveys the PMR contractor responsibilities.
* To add a reference that links the target audience to the PMR Retrieval Home Page and PMR SOP.
 | III.iii.1.C.5.b |
| * To inform the target audience of the medical release forms that ***will not*** be processed by the PMR contractor.
* To add references on medical release forms not processed by PMR contractor, the PMR Retrieval Home Page and PMR SOP, and PMR contractor responsibilities.
 | III.iii.1.C.5.c |
| To incorporate guidance for RO leadership.  | III.iii.1.C.5.d |
| To define the PMR Super User responsibilities. | III.iii.1.C.5.e |
| To provide guidance on how to upload documents into the PMR Vault. | III.iii.1.C.5.f |
| To provide guidance on how handle a reject notice when a PHP refuses to give VA a copy of the claimant’s medical records.  | III.iii.1.C.5.g |
| To add an exhibit that discuss the PMR portal checklist  | III.iii.1.C.6.a  |
| To add an exhibit that discuss the PMR process Veterans Service Representative (VSR) checklist  | III.iii.1.C.7.a  |
| * To revise the topic title and add military treatment facility due to Tricare identifying military hospitals and clinics around the world as military treatment facility (MTFs).
* To revise guidance that discusses processing *VA Form 21-8358 Notice to Department of Veterans Affairs of Admission to Uniformed Services Hospital*, as the form is no longer used by Tricare/the Department of Defense (DoD).
 | III.iii.1.C.8.a  |
| * To revise guidance that discusses the DoD and VA data sharing agreement.
* To revise guidance on limitation on requests to uniformed services hospitals.
* To add a reference that informs the target audience how to locate a military treatment facility (MTF).
 | III.iii.1.C.8.b |
| To add a reference that provides additional information on how to handle medical evidence from a MTF after March 24, 2015.  | III.iii.1.C.9.a  |
| To remove notes on the use of *VA Form 21-508 (372), Certificate of Identification* as the form is no longer used.  | III.iii.1.C.10.f |
| To list the Pittsburgh RO and Philadelphia PMC as the centralized VA facilities that are processing foreign claims and requesting authentication of foreign documents.  | III.iii.1.C.11.c |
| To list the Pittsburgh RO and Philadelphia PMC as the VA facilities that do not require Benefits Assistance Service (BAS) assistance when requesting authentication of foreign documents. | III.iii.1.C.11. d |
| To revise guidance that discusses the referrals for translation of foreign documents. | III.iii.1.C.12.a |
| To revise guidance on how to route translation document(s) to the Pittsburgh RO.  | III.iii.1.C.12.b |
| To add a reference that provides additional information about the Treasury Department sanction program. | III.iii.1.C.13.a |
| To add a reference regarding who is responsible for processing foreign claims and contacting Consular Officers.  | IIII.iii.1.C.14.b |

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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, DirectorCompensation Service |

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