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

**Veterans Benefits Administration May 7, 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 M21-1MR, Part III, “General Claims Process,” Subpart iv, “General Rating Process.”***Notes***: * Minor editorial changes have also been made to
* update incorrect or obsolete hyperlink references
* update obsolete terminology, where appropriate
* renumber each topic based on the standard that the first topic in each section is Topic 1
* reassign alphabetical designations to individual blocks and repaginate, 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 M21-1MR standards.
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| Reason(s) for the Change | Citation |
| To add a new Block d to provide a definition and examples of refractive errors. | M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, Chapter 4, Section B, Topic 1, Block d (III.iv.4.B.1.d) |
| * To relocate old Block e guidance on reconciling inconsistent findings with refractive error and instead make it a note under the new Block e.
* To remove old Block e guidance related to a definition and examples of refractive errors and move to new Block d
* To provide guidance to view prior determinations as erroneous or at least not representing best correction when the best corrected vision on any examination by the Department of Veterans Affairs is better than prior determinations.
 | III.iv.4.B.1.e |
| To add a new Block f with guidance on evaluating visual acuity on the basis of corrected distance vision with central fixation and applicable exceptions. | III.iv.4.B.1.f |
| To add a new Block g with evaluation guidance related to when the evidence shows anatomical loss of one eye together with inability to wear a prosthesis. | III.iv.4.B.1.g |
| * To add Rating Schedule definition of incapacitating episodes in the context of evaluation of angle-closure glaucoma.
* To add information related to minimum evaluation of 10 percent when continuous medication is required.
 | III.iv.4.B.2.c |
| To add a new Block d to differentiate evaluation guidelines for cataracts based on whether preoperative versus postoperative. | III.iv.4.B.2.d |
| To add a new Block e to provide information on etiologies of dry eye syndrome and considerations to be made when selecting a diagnostic code. | III.iv.4.B.2.e |
| To relocate information related to evaluation guidelines for diplopia from old Block d (now Block f) to new Block g. | III.iv.4.B.2.f |
| To provide information related to evaluation guidelines for diplopia. | III.iv.4.B.2.g |
| To add a new Block h with guidance related to retinitis pigmentosa. | III.iv.4.B.2.h |
| To add cross-reference to IV.ii.2.B.2.a for diseases found to represent organic diseases of the nervous system. | III.iv.4.B.3.a |
| To remove duplicate information related to considering the Veteran’s Military Occupational Specialty in claims for hearing loss as it already appears at 3.c. | III.iv.4.B.3.b |
| To provide guidance related to combat for purposes of conceding noise exposure for hearing loss and as it relates to lay statements as to incurrence. | III.iv.4.B.3.c |
| * To add instructions to include information that noise exposure is conceded based on combat in examination requests.
* To add guidance on how to evaluate auditory acuity in claims received from a reservist on account of active or inactive duty for training.
 | III.iv.4.B.3.d |
| To add guidance that under diagnostic code 6260 tinnitus will be assigned a single 10 percent evaluation, regardless of whether unilateral, bilateral, or in the head. | III.iv.4.B.3.f |
| To add a new Block h with general guidelines applicable to effective dates for an increased evaluation for hearing loss. | III.iv.4.B.3.h |
| To remove old Block i containing outdated and unnecessary guidance on nonorganic hearing impairment due to psychiatric disease when a reduction in a rating for hearing impairment is shown.  | III.iv.4.B.3.i |
| To add a new Block i with guidance related to situations in which an effective date for an increased evaluation for hearing loss may be prior to the date of examination. | III.iv.4.B.3.i |
| To remove old Block j containing outdated and unnecessary guidance on awarding service connection for functional hearing impairment. | III.iv.4.B.3.j |
| To add a new Block l to incorporate Rating Schedule provisions related to evaluating exceptional patterns of hearing impairment. | III.iv.4.B.3.l |
| To add a new Block m to provide guidance related to evaluating hearing loss when speech discrimination scores are not appropriate or cannot be obtained. | III.iv.4.B.3.m |
| To add a new Block n with guidance that hearing impairment due to Meniere’s disease is not required to meet hearing loss criteria under 38 CFR 3.385. | III.iv.4.B.3.n |
| To add information that where the paired organs criteria do not apply, consider the hearing in the ear for which service connection is not granted to be normal. | III.iv.4.B.3.p |
| To add a new Block r with hearing loss calculator guidance on input when audiometric values are above 105 decibels. | III.iv.4.B.3.r |

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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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