**Department of Veterans Affairs** **Part III, Subpart iv, Chapter 4**

**Veterans Benefits Administration January 10, 2014**

**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,” Chapter 4, “Rating Specific Disabilities,” Section B “Conditions of Organs of Special Sense.”***Notes***: * M21-1MR will retain some information related to the Benefits Delivery Network (BDN) until all master records are converted to VETSNET.  For information on VETSNET applications and input, consult the [VETSNET User Guides](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/Systems/awards.htm) on the Compensation Service Intranet.
* 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.
* Minor editorial changes have also been made to
* clarify Block labels and/or Block text, and
* bring the documents into conformance with M21-1MR standards.
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| Reason(s) for the Change | Citation | Page(s) |
| * Incorporate VSCM Call material from April 2013 on visual field testing. Removed outdated specific examination standards now incorporated in the DBQ and an incorrect regulatory citation. Provided updated information on visual impairment tools. Add references.
 | M21-1MR Part III, Subpart iv, Chapter 4, Section B, Topic 10, Block a (III.iv.4.B.10.a). | 4-B-2 |
| * Add September 2013 VSCM Call material on muscle function testing standards.
 | III.iv.4.B.11.d. | 4-B-8 |
| * Clarify material on VHA conversions of audiometry results to include incorporation of some material previously in block h.
 | III.iv.4.B.12.a | 4-B-11 |
| * Clarify existing material on sympathetic reading of claims to include tinnitus. Add reference.
 | III.iv.4.B.12.b | 4-B-12 |
| * Clarifying guidance on audiometric exams and opinions in hearing loss cases. Incorporate material from the May 2012 VSCM Call. Add notes on competent lay evidence and the duty MOS. Add cross references to include on the duty to assist.
 | III.iv.4.B.12.d | 4-B-14 |

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Transmittal Sheet, Continued

**i**

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| Reason(s) for the Change | Citation | Page(s) |
| * Clarify the block text when a medal opinion on tinnitus etiology or onset is or is not necessary to ensure consistency with 38 CFR 3.159(c)(4), 3.303(b), and case law on competent lay testimony. Change the block label to more clearly and accurately reflect block content
 | III.iv.4.12.e | 4-B-15 |
| * Clarify this block content on preservation of disability ratings.
 | III.iv.4.B.12.g | 4-B-18 |
| * Replace and improve guidance on the applying past versions of hearing loss criteria. Change the block label to more clearly and accurately reflect block content Add references.
 | III.iv.4.B.12.h | 4-B-18 |
| * Insert most current guidance on use of rating decision tools in hearing loss cases. Change the block label to more clearly and accurately reflect block content.
 | III.iv.4.B.12.n | 4-B-21 |

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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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**ii**