

TDVS Benefits Bulletin
22-8

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TDVS Updates

TDVS Training Updates

- August Lunch & Learn, August 10, 2022, 11:30 to 12:30 CST – VSO Asbestos Claims Training
- Annual Conference, September 26 - 28, Montgomery Bell State Park
- October Lunch & Learn, October 12, 2022, 11:30 to 12:30 CST – Topic TBD
- October Initial Accreditation Training October 17th – 21st, 2022
- [2022 Service Officer Training Calendar](#)

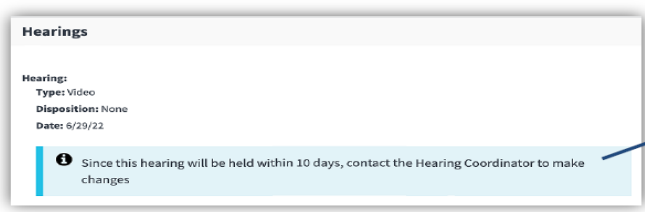
Caseflow Access and Updates

Veterans service officers can now use Caseflow to elect the type of Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) hearing that will be scheduled. Here's what it will look like to convert a to a virtual hearing, --



The **Case Details** page provides a link for VSO to convert hearing to virtual.

Select Convert to virtual link in the Hearings section to initiate the VSO virtual opt-in workflow.



Docket locks down 10 days from the scheduled hearing date. At this time, the link is no longer available and is replaced with a message informing user to contact hearing coordinator to make changes.

A complete step-by-step guide to converting to a virtual hearing can be found on pages 17 – 19 of the [Caseflow: VSO Quick Reference Guide](#).

Here's more on Caseflow and Virtual Hearings:

In December 2021, TDVS hosted a [lunch and learn](#) that introduced advocates to Caseflow, which is a web-based tool that enables the tracking and processing of appealed claims at BVA. This lunch and learn covered Caseflow basics – *What is it? How does it work? How will it benefit your advocacy?*

All TDVS accredited representatives have Caseflow access. The [recorded presentation and slides](#) are available if you need a refresher

This [Fact Sheet](#) explains more about Virtual Hearings including internet and device requirements.

Here's another resource to support hearing coordination:

Please welcome Ms. Tammy Raymond who recently joined the Appeals Division Team as a Customer Service Representative. She's working to support appeals resolution and timeliness by contacting Veterans when BVA schedules their hearing and coordinating convenient hearing options.

Please reach out to her at tammy.raymond@tn.gov or 615-981-2787 or any of the [Appeals Division Team](#) for hearing coordination. Please coordinate with the Appeals Division Team if you convert a scheduled hearing or are contemplating establishing Power of Attorney when a BVA appeal is pending. Also, be sure to put communication notes in VetraSpec.

[Submit](#)

NEW COMMUNICATION

TYPE:

- Office Visit
- VA communication
- CVSO communication
- Phone
- Incoming Mail
- E-mail
- Outgoing mail
- Home visit
- FAX
- Outreach
- Lost claim
- 100% P&T and Chapter 35
- Claim Electronically Submitted
- Burial Pre-Registration Completed
- Local Hearing
- Board Hearing

DATE: August 9, 2022 **TIME:** 10:02 a.m.

B I U ABC [Rich Text Editor Icons]

Converted scheduled VTC hearing to Virtual via Caseflow. Notified TDVS Appeals Division.]

Path: p

Tennessee Veteran Spotlight

Check out the link below for Part 2 of the [#TNVeteranSpotlight](#) with Captain Barbara Bell!



VA and Veteran Benefits Updates

Regulatory Updates

- [Proposed Rule – National Service Life Insurance – Veterans Affairs Life Insurance \(VALife\) Program Amendments](#)

On July 14, 2022, VA published a [proposed rule](#) in the Federal Register that proposes to amend its regulations that govern National Service Life Insurance. Among other things, the proposed rule implements legislative provisions that authorized a new program of insurance.

VA Insurance, including discussion of the proposed VALife, was the topic at [June's Lunch and Learn](#).

- [Notice – Unprocessed Election into the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program \(RAMP\)](#)

On July 20, 2022, VA published a [notice](#) in the Federal Register providing notification that VA will no longer process elections (opt-ins) into RAMP. Claimants who previously submitted a timely RAMP election that has not yet been processed must request VA process it before October 18, 2022. The request must be sent by email to RAMP@VA.gov by October 18, 2022.

- [Notice and Request for Comment – Calculation of Average Wait Time for New and Established Patients](#)

On July 25, 2022, VA published a [notice and request for comment](#) in the Federal Register describing a revised methodology for calculating wait time metrics presented on the [Access to Care](#) website. It also requests public comment on the revised wait time metrics.

SBC-DIC Offset Phased Elimination

Remember – the Survivor Benefit Plan – Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBC-DIC) offset will be fully eliminated as of January 1, 2023. This SBP-DIC Offset Phased Elimination [Quick Reference Guide](#) is a great resource.

PACT Act

The PACT Act become law with the President’s signature on Wednesday, August 10th. Here’s the [TDVS Fact Sheet](#) and [more info from VA](#).

Practice Like a Pro

Advocacy Tips – Back to Basics

In May, TDVS began an Advocacy Tips series to help you practice like a pro by providing basic advocacy tips on: I’m a Service Officer...Now What? That series continued last month by providing advocacy tips on connecting the dots obtaining information to help substantiate a claim. The series continues this month with several tips for effective advocacy.

(1) I’m a Service Officer...Now What?

(2) Connecting the Dots

(a) How to review a VA claim file;

(b) Obtaining Military Records and Information to Help Substantiate a Claim.

(c) Effective Advocacy Before VA.

Part IV: Effective Advocacy Before VA

Information is taken in part from the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) Veterans Benefits Manual, 2021-22 edition.

- **Advocacy Tip:** Effective advocates know what evidence the VA needs to grant a claim and provide their clients with a significant advantage. VA wants to adjudicate cases in 125 days or less. In fact, Fully Developed Claims (FDC) are completed nearly a [month quicker](#) than non-FDC.

If an advocate can submit a FDC or ready-to-rate claim, the claimant has a much better chance of promptly receiving their VA benefits. The Nashville VARO team provided training on how to expedite both rating and non-rating claims -- [2021 Spring Regional Quarterly Training](#).

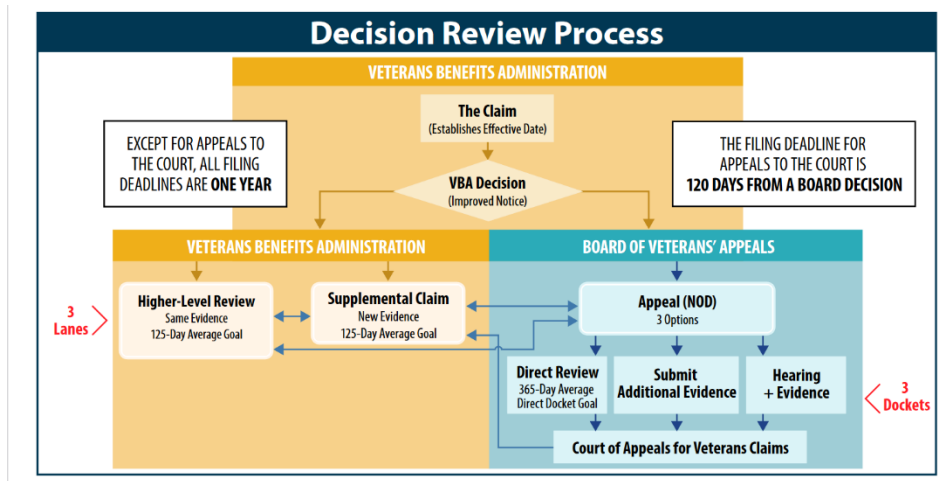
- **Advocacy Tip:** It is possible to give a claimant general advice about VA benefits without first seeing any records. However, there are too many variations in eligibility rules and there is too much at stake to take a chance on advising the claimant fully without first looking at all the claimant's relevant records.

TDVS facilitates access to several VA Systems, such as VBMS and SHARE, necessary to review a VA claims file by supporting issuance of a VA Personal Identify Verification or PIV card. Here are [step-by-step](#) instructions for using your PIV to access VA Systems. TDVS has also provided training on how to use [SHARE](#) and [Caseflow](#) (December 2021 Lunch and Learn).

[Benefits Bulletin 21-6](#) provided step-by step instructions for tracking claim development with VBMS. TDVS's September 2021 Lunch and Learn -- [How to Read a Decision Letter](#) -- is another resource to refresh yourself on the basics. **TDVS's Training Officer and Appeals Division personnel are available to support in-person small group trainings on these and other topics to ensure you're practicing like a pro.**

- **Advocacy Tip: You can impact appeal resolution and timeliness!**

[VA's Appeals Modernization Fact Sheet](#) is a good visual tool to help clients understand the options for disagreeing with a VA decision. It also provides basic considerations to assist in counseling clients on which lane is right for them.



In addition, BVA's Office of Administrative Review or OAR has provided several tools including [AMA and Decision Review Options Communications Toolkit](#) as part of its Appeals Modernization Act or AMA education campaign to promote greater understanding of the decision review options available under the AMA.

Counseling a veteran on how to disagree with a VA decision is complex. If you catch the mistake immediately, you might use the [Claim Accuracy Request](#) process. A veteran might disagree with one of the Appeals Modernization Act's three options – supplemental claim; higher-level review; or appeal to BVA. TDVS's [Appeals Division](#) team is always available to help you weigh the pros and cons – such as the time it might take for a decision and likelihood of success -- of the various methods a veteran might use to disagree with a VA decision. Perhaps most importantly, TDVS's Appeals Division stands ready to support you in determining the evidence needed to prevail on the claim and offer recommendations on how to obtain and submit that evidence to VA.

Here are even more **Advocacy Tips** on [Effective Strategies for Written and Oral Advocacy Before VA](#) provided by NVLSP.

Advocate Spotlight

Please join us in welcoming Tennessee's newest accredited representatives:

- Susan Brown, Rutherford County
- Matthew Compton, Meigs County
- Tia Flagg, Montgomery County
- Dawn Lucier, Washington County
- James Patterson, Sequatchie County
- Lindy Register, Crockett County

Daniel Schultheis, Warren County
Derrick Sims, Roane County
Tim Trotter, Houston County
Nathan Vaughn, Trousdale County

Congratulations on your recent completion of TDVS's Accreditation Course and TDVS accreditation!

If you have an example of teamwork between Veteran service offices/organizations across the state making a difference in the lives of Tennessee veterans, please share with your Regional Director for possible inclusion in an upcoming "Advocate Spotlight."

TDVS Benefits Bulletins Can Be Found on the [VSO Tools](#) Portion of TDVS's Website

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