## VA ADJUDICATOR JOURNEY



The VA Adjudicator Journey Map represents a common set of moments Adjudicators experience during the life-cycle of a claim. While this map does not represent what every Adjudicator does, thinks and feels as they process each claim, it is a good starting point to highlight the bright spots and pain points during the process and recognize high impact improvement opportunities. This journey map identifies key moments that matter during which the VA can build trust and positively impact Adjudicators' work experience and, in turn, the VA's customer experience. The corresponding opportunity statements are intended to help kickstart idea generation for addressing the needs of these key moments.

KEY
🗱 Bright Spot
🥖 Pain Point
People Involved

<ul> <li>In-person meeting with Servicemembers</li> <li>Helping SSMs understand how the Disability Claim process works</li> <li>No visibility into the claim process and the conse- quence of their work</li> <li>Error cause</li> <li>Una mist</li> </ul>	Reviews Submitted Claim to List Next Actions       Retr from DO         Email + VBMS       VBMS	Carr wee not by t Med Carr Carc Carc	Establishes Claim & Releases Claim to Mational Work Que   Requests Exams   VBMS   Exams Accepted Exams Accepted Can delay claim by weeks if exams are not initially accepted by the Contract Medical Examiner Lack of training makes catching Medical The training makes catching Medical	Tools work as expected Tools work as expected Preparing workspace & mind to process efficiently	Reviews Weekly Bulletin for Protocol & Policy Changes	VBMS + Word Do There are more familiar issues than unfamiliar issues Tension between investing time to triage	Plans Approach to Reach Daily Point Goals       Selects G         Doc       Image: Comparison of the second s	Claim Reviews MSC's o VSR's Work Through S1 Che VBMS + VBMS-R + Word Doc	Medical Files in VH. Systems       Non-BDD Claim       VBMS + CAPRI + CDW + BIL	Creates Trusted Claimed Issue List	LIST	AGGREGATING EVIDE	ENCE WHILE BUILDING CONTEXT	Aggregates Issue       Investigates Evidence         Evidence       Claimed Issue         Rewarding to find evidence       Gratifying to make un-ratable claimed	es Every Issue	BDD claims are easier	onfirms Claimed ssues Are Active	termines Highest, ustifiable, Level Of Impact	WRITING THE STORY         rk       Writes the Narrative to Justify the Decision         Word Doc + VBMS-R	& FINALIZING THE CLAIM Populates Narrative Box with Evidence & Guiding Law	Reviews Veteran's       Records Point         Claim Letter For       Earned         Completeness       Word Doc / Exce         VBMS-R       Word Doc / Exce         Production points ar       issue rated. After con	per pleting	Proofreads Narrative Generates Award Pushes "Finalize"	Claim sent for printing & mailing to Veteran	QUALITY REVIEW O Completes Quality Checklist
Program to SSMs         Msc only         Msc only         In-person meeting with Servicemembers         Helping SSMs understand how the Disability Claim process works         No visibility into the claim process and the conse- quence of their work         Una mist	Claim to List Next Actions       from DO         Email + VBMS       VBMS         Errors in claim development cause rework & delayed benefits to Veterans       VBMS         Unable to correct own mistakes & learn from them       VBMS	from Private Doctors, DOD, & VHA Systems VSR Only VBMS + CAPRI + CDW + BIRLS Exa Exa Exa Exa Exa Exa Exa Exa Exa Exa	Exams Accepted       Satisfaction of helping Veteran & getting a classep closer to being rate         Can delay claim by weeks if exams are not initially accepted by the Contract Medical Examiner       Lack of training makes catching Medical	g a a dim one tedImage: Tools work as expecteddim one tedImage: Preparing workspace & mind to process efficientlyImage: Prepar	Bulletin for Protocol & Policy Changes         E-Mail + TMS + M21-1         The amount & pace of change to protocol & policy deteriorates confidence in	<ul> <li>VBMS + Word Description</li> <li>There are more familiar issues than unfamiliar issues</li> <li>Tension between investing time to triage contentions across claims</li> </ul>	Doc Hopeful about meeting production goals Energized to ge Uncertain if claims in	Claim       VSR's Work Through S1 Che         VBMS + VBMS-R + Word Doc         get started       MSC annotate & flag fill for claimed issues	Medical Files in VH. Systems       Non-BDD Claim       VBMS + CAPRI + CDW + BIL	IRLS	Claimed Issues Rated Similarly	Chronologizes Medical Evidence Files	VBMS + Word Doc	Claimed Iss	es Every Issue	BDD claims are easier	rd Doc + VASRD + M21-1	termines Highest, ustifiable, Level Of Impact	Narrative to Justify the Decision		Ctaim Letter For Completeness       Earned         VBMS-R       Word Doc / Exce         VBMS-R       Word Doc / Exce         Production points ar issue rated. After con	Verifies Service     for Correct Codes & Disability Percentage       Disability Percentage       VBMS	es Proofreads Narrative Generates Award Button	Claim sent for printing & mailing to Veteran	
<ul> <li>In-person meeting with Servicemembers</li> <li>Helping SSMs understand how the Disability Claim process works</li> <li>No visibility into the claim process and the conse- quence of their work</li> <li>Error cause</li> <li>Una mist</li> </ul>	Email + VBMS       VBMS         Errors in claim development cause rework & delayed benefits to Veterans       Unable to correct own mistakes & learn from them	VBMS + CAPRI + CDW + BIRLS         Image: Carrier of the second	Exams Accepted       Satisfaction of helping Veteran & getting a classep closer to being rate         Can delay claim by weeks if exams are not initially accepted by the Contract Medical Examiner       Lack of training makes catching Medical	g a a dim one tedImage: Tools work as expecteddim one tedImage: Preparing workspace & mind to process efficientlyImage: Prepar	The amount & pace of change to protocol & policy deteriorates confidence in	<ul> <li>There are more familiar issues than unfamiliar issues</li> <li>Tension between investing time to triage contentions across claims</li> </ul>	Hopeful about meeting production goals Demotivating to be uncertain if claims in	get started	VBMS + CAPRI + CDW + BI					Rewarding to find evidence	In Energized to get started	BDD claims are easier	ier to determine		Word Doc + VBMS-R		Production points ar issue rated. After con	per pleting	VBMS-A		VBMS -
<ul> <li>Helping SSMs understand how the Disability Claim process works</li> <li>No visibility into the claim process and the conse- quence of their work</li> <li>Una mist</li> </ul>	Unable to correct own mistakes & learn from them	Carr wee not by t Med Carr Carc Carc	Can delay claim by weeks if exams are not initially accepted by the Contract Medical Examiner Lack of training makes catching Medical	g a aim one itedImage: Preparing workspace & mind to process efficientlyImage: Second state discuptive to the process than helpfulImage: Second state the process than helpfulImage: Second state discuptive to the process than helpfulImage: Second state the process the process the process than helpful	The amount & pace of change to protocol & policy deteriorates confidence in	<ul> <li>Tension between investing time to triage contentions across claims</li> </ul>	Demotivating to be uncertain if claims in	for claimed issues	files	Feels organized			*	Rewarding to find evidence	In Energized to get started	BDD claims are easier	<i>ier to determine</i>				issue rated. After con	pleting			
quence of their work ben	Unable to correct own mistakes & learn from them	not by t Med Lac cate	not initially accepted by the Contract Medical Examiner Lack of training makes catching Medical	than helpful Uses multiple browsers for tools to function	& policy deteriorates confidence in	contentions across claims qu		Lack of file annotation						issue a ratable issu		is Active Duty th	ause it relies on most recent dical evidence	ling Value through ir Critical Thinking Ils & Judgement	RVSRs' work along the way is paying off	F	claim, RVSRs docume exact number of issu eling accomplished Returning to the stra & selecting the next of	s rated	<ul> <li>Rewarding to send disability compensation to Veterans</li> <li>Earns points per claim</li> </ul>		Confirms Veterans are accurately compensat
		Knc ord exp	Examiner errors difficult Knowing what exams to order comes with experience, meaning time & mistakes		Knowing what changed requires following links left in the Bulletin (often 2+ clicks) or attending the monthly Quality call			Feels redundant to go through all the inform tion that has already been aggregated by MSCs & VSRs	vn vating when evidence is missing or inaccurate because Veterans wait na- longer for benefits	s issues, the longer this process takes	medical knowledge to know which issues are rated the same or are related medically	be saved	<ul> <li>detective work especially if the files are not digital &amp; searchable</li> <li>Not all medical evidence is created equal. RVSRs constantly check if evidence makes sense &amp; is ratable</li> </ul>	Repeatedly searching the same keywords in every file distracts from evaluating the evidence No tool supports this crucial step, forcing them to create custom workarounds Relies on Word Docs or paper to see how each issue has evolved over time	that requires continuous focus, organization, and	Challenging with older Veterans due to fewer medical records from their time in Service	it req edge Lack betw VASR proce the e disab Autor RVSR	<ul> <li>allenging, especially new Raters, because equires a deep knowl-ge of the VASRD</li> <li>ck of connection ween tool &amp; the SRD slows Raters's press of comparing evidence with the ability levels</li> <li>cromated features inhibit SRs ownership of the imate rating decision</li> <li>Calculators seem to give the final answer only provide a sugg rating. The final rate decision rests with the RVSR</li> <li>Tedious (lots of copying &amp; pasting)</li> <li>Frustrating when features inhibit</li> <li>SRs ownership of the imate rating decision</li> </ul>	pested ting teeling utput ure in g in the	<ul> <li>VBMS-R provides a small text box to write &amp; review the narrative</li> <li>The required legal language makes it harder for Veterans to understand the decision</li> <li>Does my logic make sense? Did I miss anything?</li> </ul>		<ul> <li>Only allowed 30 minutes to review per claim</li> <li>Spending time to check th same data for the 3rd time</li> </ul>			Everyone loses whe an error is discover in this phase
This is VA making a first impression on a soon-to-be Veteran		An er mear	An error in this phase means re-work		Just the suggestion of change is enough to reduce RVSRs' confidence in their work			Quality review development is time & energy that could go to rating issues		document review & provides confidence that all claimed issues have been investigated	A high number of contentions is fun for some & overwhelming for others			Disconnect between systems drives RVSRs to develop solutions that keep them organized and simplify the data transfer	The method of getting information takes energy away from understanding and evaluating the information		deterr level t maxin the Ve focus	ching evidence to rmine what rating I they can justify to imize benefits for /eteran requires s & space to build ogical argument	to check themselves as they type their	motivates RVSRs and the narrative is their only direct communication		Last opportunity for the VA to check the claim before it goes to the Veteran	Important to get monetary compensation right. No one wants the Veteran to appeal in order to get it right		VA is assessing the quality of service provided to Veteran
empower MSCs to provide best-in-class customer experience to SSMs? extend the connection MSCs have with SSMs & Veterans to those working at Regional Offices?		stanc	increase MSCs' under- standing of how their work matters to RVSRs?		align the delivery of policy and protocol changes with the moment this new information will be applied?			reduce RVSRs time spent reviewing claim development work?	introduce a team mindse among those who process disability claims? increase RVSRs' confider that the claims in their que are ready to rate?	s reliable and eliminates transferring information between tools?	sdesign a playful approach to translating claimed issues to make the task more manageable?	h	reis	integrate systems so that reviewing documents in VBMS is accessible when writing the decision in VBMS-R?	make it fun to build the service and medical histories for each issue?		weighir	port RVSRs' analysis andhelp RVSRs in preve ning of evidence with the errors in calculator se (ASRD)? and data entry?	-	encourage a personal connection between RVSRs and Veterans when sharing the claim decision?		design for zero errors getting to Veterans?	maximize Veteran's confidence in their compen- sation for each rated issue?		expand definition of quality and how it is measured to include Veteran centered metric

Review each month for each RVSR