



Office of Disability and Medical Assessment (DMA)

DMA-14-001

January 14, 2014

FACT SHEET

Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) Referral Clinic

BACKGROUND

This Fact Sheet is intended to provide general information regarding compensation and pension (C&P) service establishing Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) Referral Clinics to support VHA treating providers and the Fully Developed Claims Program.

Veterans increasingly are bringing DBQs to VHA primary care providers (PCP) and specialty providers (SP) to complete. To support PCPs and SPs when DBQs are presented by Veterans, each C&P service will institute the procedures outlined below to complete DBQs in support of VHA treating providers and in support of the Fully Developed Claims Initiative.

VHA supports the completion of DBQs by treating providers and encourages a "no wrong door" philosophy to assist our Veterans. The completion of DBQs by C&P clinicians and VHA primary/specialty care is a key strategy in the Fully Developed Claims (FDC) process. If a Veteran requests to have their DBQ completed by PCPs and/or SPs, these clinicians may, if unable to complete the DBQ, provide a "warm hand-off" to the C&P service (the Referral Clinic). The C&P service staff can assist the PCPs, SPs, and the Veteran by completing DBQs, if requested, depending on certain criteria addressed below. The advantage of the local C&P service completing DBQs will help promote efficiency by having certified, trained C&P examiners complete DBQs. This process can assist Veterans who intend to submit Fully Developed Claims by providing timely and Veteran-centric services.

DBQs are standardized medical documents approved by the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) that are currently used by VHA disability examiners to record diseases and illnesses for Veterans' compensation and pension disability benefit claims. DBQs can also be used by VHA primary care/specialty care providers, as well as private sector physicians, as a standardized format for communication of medical evidence as part of the Veteran's claim for VA disability benefits. VHA's policies on DBQs are set out in VHA Directive 2013-002, *Documentation of Medical Evidence for Disability Evaluation Purposes*, January 14, 2013.

Completion of DBQs by C&P Service

- Each C&P service implementing these procedures will make VHA Primary Care and the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) aware of the availability of this support for the Fully Developed Claims process.
- When the Veteran is directed to C&P, the following questions should be considered to ensure the suitability of having the DBQ completed by C&P:

1. Is the Veteran receiving care at a VHA facility for the condition for which the DBQ is to be completed?

- If yes, assign a clinician to complete the DBQ, time permitting, or schedule an appointment to have the DBQ completed based on the evidence in the Veteran's treatment records. The clinician must exercise judgment as to whether to conduct any aspect of an examination on the Veteran as part of completing the DBQ or place a call to the Veteran for additional information. The evidence considered in completing the DBQ must be noted on the DBQ.
- If no and the Veteran has sufficient medical evidence with them to complete the DBQ, such as medical treatment records and/or military treatment records, assign a clinician to complete the DBQ, time permitting, or schedule an appointment to have the DBQ completed. The clinician must exercise judgment as to whether to conduct a physical examination on the Veteran as part of completing the DBQ. The Veteran's statements and medical information supplied by the Veteran must be documented on the DBQ.
- If no and the Veteran does not have sufficient medical evidence with them to complete the DBQ, refer the Veteran to a Veterans Service Organization (VSO) or VBA (<http://benefits.va.gov/compensation/> or 1-800-827-1000).

2. Is the Veteran currently service-connected for the condition?

- If yes, have the DBQ completed as an increase in evaluation for the condition. Conditions for which a Veteran is service connected are documented in the VHA medical record.
- If no or unknown by the Veteran, have the DBQ completed as an original evaluation of the condition.

3. Does the Veteran have new medical evidence on-file not previously considered or with them?

- If yes, document all new evidence when completing the DBQ. Return any tangible evidence or files to the Veteran

➤ If no, complete the DBQ based on the evidence currently of record.

- In the event a DBQ cannot be completed at the time of request, the C&P service should schedule the Veteran for an appointment. Scheduled appointments will be determined by the number and complexity of the DBQs being requested to be completed, to allow for appropriate completion time. However, the C&P service should only set appointment times to allow for the completion of up to three DBQs per appointment.
- The C&P service may be limited to completing only certain types of DBQs. Note: the following DBQs and Services can be completed by the C&P Referral Clinic depending upon available specialty resources and clinical disciplines in the clinic.
 - When extensive diagnostic testing is required (e.g. PFT, Sleep Apnea Study, ECHO)
 - Medical nexus opinions or other medical opinions
 - Pension examinations
 - Unemployability
 - Audio
 - General medical
 - Gulf War (undiagnosed illness)
 - POW
 - Dental
 - Eye
 - Mental Health
 - Traumatic Brain Injury
 - Workup of an undiagnosed condition
- In the event one of the above DBQs are presented by the Veteran, the Veteran should be informed that due to the complexity in completing these types of DBQs that often require specific instructions from VBA, an examination request (VA Form 21-2507) must be received from VBA for VHA to complete the exam. The Veteran should be provided with a warm hand-off and instructed to contact VBA at 1-800-827-1000 or at <http://benefits.va.gov/compensation/>.
- In all scenarios, with the exception of those DBQs identified above, a DBQ will be completed based on evidence of record. The determination of whether an examination or phone call to the Veteran will be made is at the discretion of the examiner.
- C&P clinicians may complete DBQs in CAPRI in lieu of the paper form DBQ. CAPRI can be used to initiate, sign and identify the DBQ as a "non 2507" DBQ. DBQs may also be obtained through the VA DBQ internet web site:
http://benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/dbq_disabilityexams.asp.

- The examiner will clearly identify in the REMARKS section the DBQ was completed for the Veteran as evidence in support of the Fully Developed Claims (FDC) process, to differentiate the DBQ completed for a Veteran from one completed in response to a VA Form 21-2507 request
- The following ICD and Stop Codes should be used by Referral C&P clinics to capture workload for Veterans requesting to have DBQs completed without a VA Form 21-2507 examination request:

	TOV=Telephone only visit	Primary stop code	Secondary stop code	Purpose of the Visit and Appointment	Diagnosis code	Procedure code #	
DBQs without 2507	Reg. C&P	Face to Face visit		450	01'	V70.3	99450
		Ace, TOV		450	01'	V70.3	99450
		Ace, chart review		450	01'	V70.3	99450
		TeleHealth Visit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	IDES	Face to Face visit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Ace, TOV	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Ace, chart review	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		TeleHealth Visit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

- NOTE: In the event there is a question regarding CPT code 99450 and if it is active for use, please check with your local Health Information Management Chief who can provide you with the current active codes.
- The Veteran will not receive a copy of any completed DBQs, but will be provided with a letter, tailored by each facility, which includes the information in Attachment A. Inform the Veteran to provide this letter to VBA in support of their Fully Developed Claim.
- After the DBQ is completed, the Veteran will be provided with additional resources regarding disability benefit claims: <http://benefits.va.gov/compensation/> or 1-800-827-1000, for follow-up with VBA.

For additional information not covered in this Fact Sheet contact the Office of Disability and Medical Assessment (DMA) at (202) 461-6699 or (727) 540-3800, visit the DMA website at <http://vaww.dema.va.gov>, or send an inquiry to the DMA Corporate mailbox at CorporateMailbox.DMA@va.gov

ATTACHMENT A

[INSERT FACILITY LETTERHEAD]

Date:

To: Veterans Benefits Administration

From: VHA Compensation and Pension Program

Thru: **[Insert Veteran's name]**

RE: Veteran Request for Assistance with DBQ Completion

Please accept this letter as verification that **[Insert Veteran's Name]** was seen at the **[Insert Name of Facility]** for assistance in completion of a Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) at his or her request, in support of a claim for VA disability benefits. The DBQ was completed in the CAPRI electronic format and can be found in the Veteran's VHA medical treatment record; it is viewable under the Clinical Documents tab in CAPRI or under NOTES in CPRS.

The DBQ(s) completed included: _____.

Thank you,

Department of Veterans Affairs
[Insert Name of Facility]
Compensation and Pension Department
[Insert Contact Information]