AR-1

Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: June 25, 2018 – June 29, 2018

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018

Standard:	Category 1: Part B Recommended Decisions

Number of cases reviewed:	49
Acceptable rating:	90%
Rating for review:	98%

Describe Findings:

The AR review team identified the following general trends or patterns when reviewing the Part B Recommended Decisions category: RD Cover Letters did not address which medical conditions were adjudicated or the types of benefits awarded (ex. monetary award amount). Statement[s] of the Case did not contain information pertaining to key developmental steps critical to the adjudication of the claim. Statement[s] of the Case also contained analyses of the case file evidence including citations of law and DEOIC procedures. Explanation[s] of Findings did not contain a discussion of the underlying program rules and policy germane to the adjudication of the claim. Explanation[s] of Findings did not contain an analysis of the case file evidence. In the Conclusions of Law section, there was a trend toward the use of confusing or extraneous language and a failure to identify which medical conditions were denied.

For the Seattle District Office there were 8 Part B recommended decisions that were shown to have errors:

Two of the eight errors found did not contain information about the medical condition and compensation being awarded in the cover letter and the introductory paragraph of the RD.

Three of the eight errors found consisted of issues with the Statement of the Case (SOC); more specifically, no discussing the source of verified employment or the dates of

verified employment. One error did not communicate information in a logical and chronological manner.

An additional two errors consisted of issues with the Explanation of Findings (EOF). More specifically, that they didn't identify program policy and procedures used to identify why the medical evidence of record was not sufficient to establish eligibility for CBD.

The final error consisted of an issue with the Conclusions of Law (COL). More specifically, the decision did not identify all the claimed conditions (denied or accepted).

Other Significant Findings:

REVIEWER(s):	DATE:
William Pridy, Eric Christeson, William Owens, Stephanie Shelton, Teresa Barrington, Tanya Freeman, Kimberly Wilson, Yolanda Banks, Kristina Green, Rodney Alston	06/28/2018

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Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: June 25, 2018 – June 29, 2018

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018

Standard:	Category 2: Payment Processing

Number of cases reviewed:	51
Acceptable rating:	90%
Rating for review:	99%

Describe Findings:

The Payment Processing category identifies specific payments processed during the review period and evaluates whether compensation was paid in accordance with established policy and procedures. Overall, payments were completed with very few errors. All payments were made to the correct payee account and in the amount specified in the final decision and the Form EN-20. As with past years, the review ratings for the four offices were extremely high.

For the Seattle District Office the reviewers found three errors including one case in which the acceptance of payment (AOP) received date, entered in ECS, did not match the AOP received date stamped on the EN-20. The reviewers found two cases in which no phone call, notes, or documentation from the FRB website was entered in ECS or OIS to show steps taken to attempt to verify the bank account information provided on the EN-20.

Other Significant Findings:

REVIEWER(s):	DATE:
William Pridy, Eric Christeson, William Owens, Stephanie Shelton, Teresa Barrington, Tanya Freeman, Kimberly Wilson, Yolanda Banks, Kristina Green, Rodney Alston	06/28/2018

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Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: June 25, 2018 – June 29, 2018

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018

Standard:	Category 3: OIS Indexing (Incoming and Outgoing Correspondence) Element 1: Incoming Correspondence Element 2: Outgoing Correspondence

Number of cases reviewed	52
Rating for Element #1	85%
Rating for Element #2	100%
Acceptable rating:	90%
Overall Category Rating:	89%

Summarize Category (or Element) Findings:

In this category the reviewer evaluates specific imaged documents received and indexed by the DO, to ensure that labeling is appropriate based on predetermined categories and subjects. The reviewer also evaluates outgoing correspondence created by the DO, to verify that documents are associated with the appropriate electronic case file and properly indexed in OIS.

Of the cases reviewed, 30 cases contained OIS indexing errors. The majority of the errors were regarding medical and employment evidence submitted which was indexed incorrectly. The other indicator errors were regarding impairment claims, and reopening requests.

Other Significant Findings:

REVIEWER(s):	DATE:
Kristina Green, Rodney Alston	06/28/2018

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Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: June 25, 2018 – June 29, 2018

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018

Standard:	Category 4: ECS Coding Element 1: Recommended Decisions Element 2: Accepted Medical Condition Coding Element 3: Causation Path Coding

Number of cases reviewed	52
Rating for Element #1	93%
Rating for Element #2	97%
Rating for Element #3	89%
Acceptable rating:	90%
Overall Category Rating:	93%

Summarize Category (or Element) Findings:

In this category, the reviewer evaluates the accuracy of Energy Compensation System (ECS) Coding, for cases at the DO, where both claims were filed and a RD was issued during the AR period. The reviewer evaluates the integrity of the data on critical elements related to case disposition, awarding of monetary and medical benefits, and information that was used as the basis for the RD.

Of the Seattle cases reviewed, 16 cases contained ECS coding errors. There were no specific trends identified in these 16 errors.

Other Significant Findings:

REVIEWER(s):	DATE:
William Pridy, Eric Christeson, William Owens, Stephanie Shelton, Teresa Barrington, Tanya Freeman, Kimberly Wilson, Yolanda Banks, Kristina Green, Rodney Alston	06/28/2018

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Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: August 13 – 17, 2018

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: June 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018

Standard:	Category # 5 – Part E Causation Claims Element #1: Development and Causation Assessment Element #2: Recommended Decision – Outcome and Written Quality

Number of Cases Reviewed:	42
Rating for Element #1:	97%
Rating for Element #2:	95%
Acceptable Rating:	90%
Overall Category Rating for Review:	96%

Summarize Category (or Element) Findings:

This category evaluated the actions taken for a Part E causation claim filed by an employee or survivor (where acceptance is not based on acceptance under Part B); whether claims were developed appropriately; resulted in the production of probative and reliable evidence to resolve the claim; and arrived at an accurate outcome to accept or deny the claim. The Seattle District Office performed well in this category, scoring 96%.

Element #1 rates Part E Causation development actions. Very few errors were found within this element. In fact, out of the six (6) errors noted, four (4) of them originate from one case. In this case, it was found that additional employment development was needed; as several periods of Department of Defense (DOD) subcontractor employment were accepted that should not have been considered covered. Industrial Hygienist (IH) and Contract Medical Consultant (CMC) reports were therefore based on incorrect dates. The remaining two (2) errors related to cases in which the Statement of Accepted Facts (SOAF) was not present in the case file.

Element # 2 evaluates Part E Causation recommended decisions (RDs). A total of thirteen (13) errors were identified within this element. No specific trends were identified within these errors. One (1) case included had an incorrect award amount in a cover letter. One case included a typo regarding employment dates. Two (2) cases were noted to have interpretation of evidence in Statement of the Case (SOC) that more appropriately should have been covered in Explanation of Findings (EOF). Another had insufficient discussion in SOC of evidence used to confirm job

titles. Such discussion would have been pertinent as the claim involved hearing loss and there was a need to show evidence used to confirm a relevant job title for our hearing loss guidelines. Two (2) cases included no discussion of IH or CMC referrals in SOC.

With regard to EOF, one (1) case was found to include an error based on an asbestos exposure acceptance based on statement provided by treating physician; however, the RD offered no explanation as to how asbestos exposure was established based on policy/program procedure. Finally, one (1) case included no discussion of evidence used to confirm employment, which resulted in a remand.

Other Significant Findings:

During the review, it was noted that there were ECS coding errors, in which ECS was coded as an acceptance based on toxic exposure when, in fact, the case was a Part E acceptance based on a Part B acceptance. These cases did not fall into the purview of this review and were not counted as errors.

AR TEAM REVIEWER(S):	DATE:
Curtis Johnson, Karoline Anders, Tony Schwiefert, Matthew Buehrle, Barry Davidson, Daniel Divittorio, Bernadette DeHerrera, Michelle Taylor, Katy McIntyre, Lavera Robinson	August 17, 2018

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Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: August 13 – 17, 2018

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: June 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018

Standard:	Category # 6 – Impairment and Wage-Loss Claims Element #1: Development of Medical Evidence, Physician Selection and Wage-Loss Calculations Element #2: Recommended Decision – Outcome and Written Quality

Number of Cases Reviewed:	50
Rating for Element #1:	96%
Rating for Element #2:	97%
Acceptable Rating:	90%
Overall Category Rating for Review:	97%

Summarize Category (or Element) Findings:

This category evaluates the actions taken for a Part E impairment or wage-loss (WL) claims filed by an employee or survivor, reviewing whether claims were developed appropriately; resulted in the production of probative and reliable evidence to resolve the claim; and arrived at an accurate outcome to accept or deny the claim. It also focuses on the sufficiency of the written content of recommended decisions (RDs). Overall, the Seattle District Office performed exceptionally well in this category, with an overall rating of 97%.

With regard to Element #1, three (3) cases were identified in which only one development letter was sent out prior to the issuance of a RD to deny the claim. Two (2) cases were found to include no WL printout in OIS. One (1) case was found to include a RD in which the Statement of the Case (SOC) lacked appropriate discussion of developmental steps taken by the CE.

In Element #2, almost all deficiencies identified related to the lack of procedural standards within the Explanation of Findings (EOF), specifically, the decisions were found to lack sufficient discussion in program criteria essential to establish lost wages and an increase in impairment.

Other Significant Findings:

N/A

AR TEAM REVIEWER(S):	DATE:
Curtis Johnson, Tony Schwiefert, Matthew Buehrle, Barry Davidson, Daniel Divittorio, Bernadette DeHerrera, Michelle Taylor, Katy McIntyre, Lavera Robinson	August 17, 2018

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Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: August 13 – 17, 2018

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: June 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018

Standard:	Category # 7 – Consequential Illnesses/Acceptances Element #1: Development Element #2: Letter Decision – Outcome and Written Quality

Number of Cases Reviewed:	43
Rating for Element #1:	100%
Rating for Element #2:	100%
Acceptable Rating:	90%
Overall Category Rating for Review:	100%

Summarize Category (or Element) Findings:

This category includes cases where a consequential condition was filed during the Accountability Review (AR) period *and* correspondence accepting that consequential condition was also sent during the AR period. The category evaluates whether claims were developed appropriately; resulted in the production of probative and reliable evidence to resolve the claim; and arrived at an accurate outcome to accept the claim for consequential illness. The Seattle District Office received a perfect score of 100% in this category, with no deficiencies identified within either Element.

Other Significant Findings:
N/A

AR TEAM REVIEWER(S):	DATE:
Curtis Johnson, Tony Schwiefert, Matthew Buehrle, Barry Davidson, Daniel Divittorio, Bernadette DeHerrera, Michelle Taylor, Katy McIntyre, Lavera Robinson	August 17, 2018