VBA Automation Helps Serve Veterans More Efficiently & Equitably

USSOCOM Warrior Care Program
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Office of Business Integration

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VBA's Vision:

We will deliver more of Veterans' earned benefits faster, and more accurately and equitably than ever before, all while delivering a world-class experience

Increased access

We are establishing VBA access points that create more direct connections *to* Veterans and *for* Veterans. These access points will be designed to better address the needs of local communities and create connections with more underserved Veterans.

Proactive outreach

We are proactively engaging Veterans and survivors to connect them with their earned benefits – rather than waiting for them to come to us. We will expand our ability to understand and meet Veterans 'where they are.'

Tools and technology

We are equipping employees with innovative tools and technology that will let them operate at the 'top of their license.' Employee accountability and continuous technology improvements will help us reach accurate decisions for our Veterans, while serving them through their channels of choice (e.g., mobile app).

Empowering employees

We are empowering employees to better meet the needs of Veterans and increase the impact they are having. We will provide a rich learning environment and support that will help employees grow in their careers while preserving our high quality standards through shared accountability.

Working with our partners

Connecting Veterans with their earned benefits

Supporting employees to deliver more benefits

We are keeping **Veterans, their families, and Survivors at the center** of everything we do

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VBA has been investing in automation for the past four years....

2019/2020		2021/2022		2023/2024	
Mail Automation Services Deployed	Mail Automation Service Optimization	Presumptive Claim Automation Pilot	Automated Decision Support Expansion	Benefits Transformation Platform	Private Medical Record Retrieval

… by bringing together advanced technologies to execute processes consistently and in the manner prescribed by VBA policy and regulations.
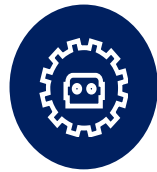
Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

Intelligent Form Recognition (IFR)

Optical Character Recognition (OCR)

Medical Annotators and Summarizers

Natural Language Processing (NLP) Models

Rules Engine
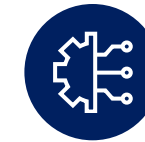
Process Management

Reporting and Analytics

We provide innovative solutions to automate and streamline the processing of VA benefits that better equip and enable VBA decision makers to deliver quality, equitable, and timely benefits to our nation's Veterans and their families.

Our mission is to provide deliver quality, equitable, and timely benefits to our nation's Veterans and their families.

VA.gov portal reduces need to fax/email/ hand-deliver applications and information	70%+ of claims are established within 24 hours of receipt of mail	Address, dependent, POA can all be updated within 1 day
Automation deployed to search and summarize key information for 171 diagnostic codes	When exams are necessary, automation can order within 1 day of claim establishment	Automating National Cemetery Association pre-need forms for Veterans and family members

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Information can be updated same day it is received

- Veteran information is kept up to date faster than ever before (Address, POA, Dependency Updated)

- Changes in dependents can be made quickly, benefit entitlements are more accurate

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70%+ of claims are established within 24 hours of receipt of mail

- Digital workers establish claims 24x7, claims are under control and available for processing faster

- Priority flashes are automatically added, helping our most critical Veterans get attention quickly

- Over 10 million packets have been processed by automation

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Automation can order exams within one day of claim establishment

- Automation orders exams via the same system and service as Claims Processors if we do not have sufficient evidence

- Automation will not order an exam unless all contentions are reviewed through automation

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Searches and summarizes health and service data for 170+ diagnostic codes

- Automation retrieves, uploads and summarizes medical data from VA Medical Centers

- Reviewed over 800 million pages of medical records

- Automation will produce Automated Review Summary Documents (ARSD)

- Avoids unnecessary exams

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We are continuing to support this mission by...

Increasing the volume of claims automated, by automating additional diagnostic codes and claim types
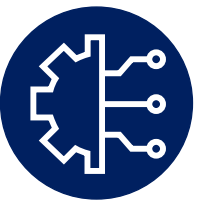
Integrating with more value-add data sources so that you won't need to provide information that VA already has access to

We are continuing to support this mission by...
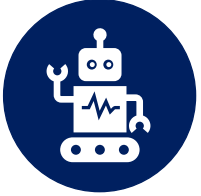
Automating the pre-discharge examination request for Servicemembers to ensure exams are ordered consistently and minimize any delays

Supporting digital collection of SHA data and reduce burden by pre-populating information based on past submissions and Veteran profile

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We are continuing to support this mission by...

Incorporating emerging technologies to introduce more confidence in understanding and interpreting free-form unstructured text

Supporting employees with additional resources, including Generative AI powered assistants

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Questions

Appendix

Automated Decision Support Process
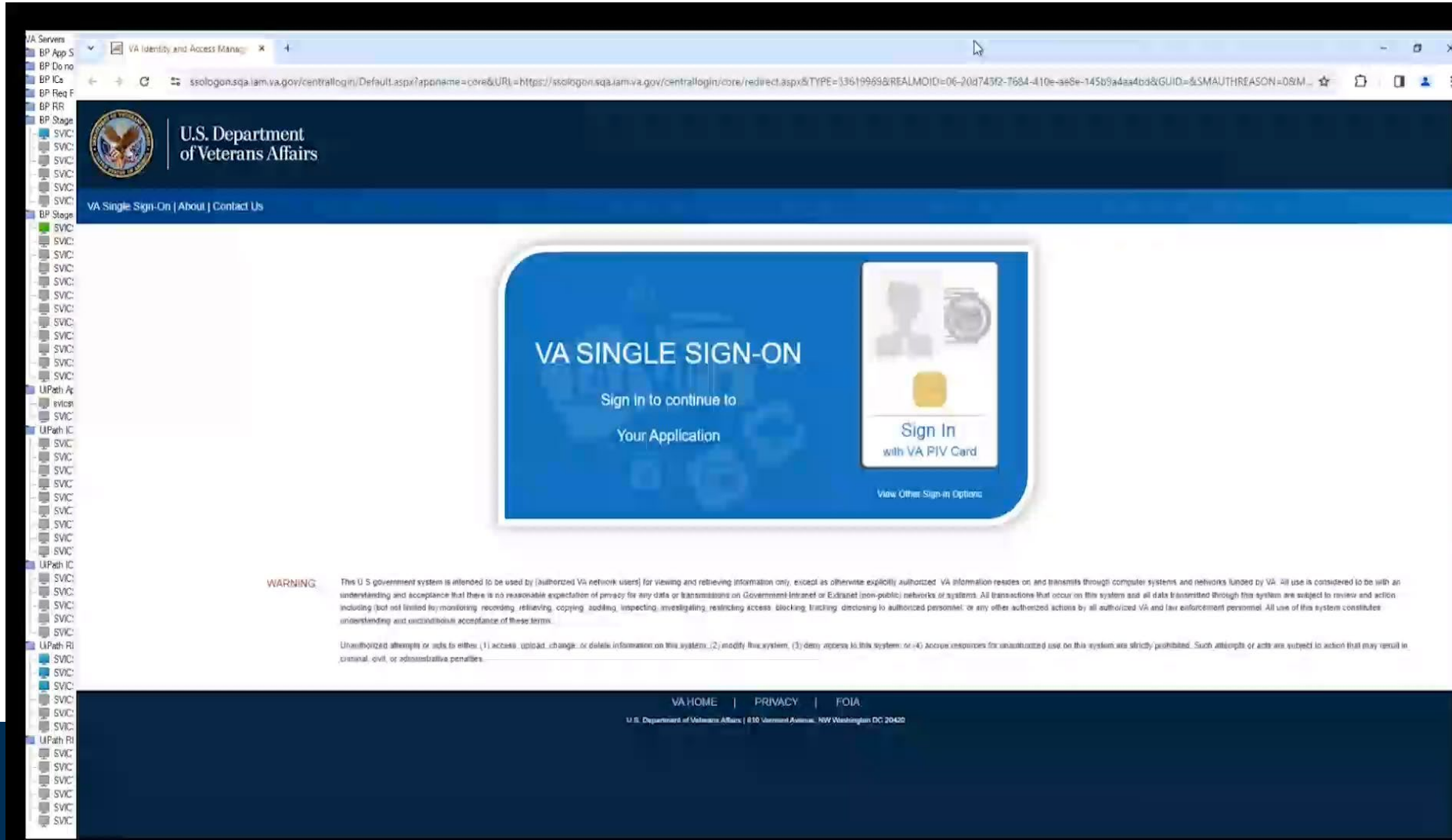
Mail Intake and Claim Establishment	Determine Eligibility for Further Automated Processing	Develop Claim	Enable Rating or Order/Draft an Exam

Packets of documents (PDF images) submitted via mail or va.gov portal are extracted and classified to:

- Match Claimant to a Veteran profile
- Understand what actions are necessary
- Create the correct type of claim
- Send letters to Claimant and Power of Attorney
- Add Special Issues to support routing to the correct Regional Office and data analysis
- Add priority flashes to support Veterans in high-risk circumstances
- Updating Veteran contact information when needed

Automated Decision Support Process

Mail Intake and Claim Establishment	Determine Eligibility for Further Automated Processing	Develop Claim	Enable Rating or Order/Draft an Exam

Automation extraction and classification has been trained to handle the variation in how a medical condition can be described and classify both typed and handwritten text.

Automated Decision Support Process

Mail Intake and Claim Establishment	Determine Eligibility for Further Automated Processing	Develop Claim	Enable Rating or Order/Draft an Exam

Claim is assessed to determine fit for the automated model and the basis of claim based on Veteran's claim history.

Data Analyzed (retrieved via API)

- ✓ Veteran not previously denied for diagnostic code
- ✓ Character of Discharge is not dishonorable
- ✓ Service Treatment Records are present in eFolder
- ✓ Veteran profile does not have high sensitivity
- ✓ If claim is not an increase, determine if presumptive processing is enabled for automation and if flash is present to indicate service in PACT eligible location

Contention Classification

- ✓ No presence of disabilities that must be routed to specialized queue (such as ALS or MST)
- ✓ Way contention was claimed allows for automated processing (ex. does not contain "tort")

Claims ineligible for Automated Decision Support Processing are routed to a Claims Processor to assess and develop.

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Automated Decision Support Process

Mail Intake and Claim Establishment — **Determine Eligibility for Further Automated Processing** — **Develop Claim** — **Enable Rating or Order/Draft an Exam**

SMITH, VETERAN | 9/2/1950 | 123456789 | 10987654321V123567 | 09/18/2023

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Veterans Health Administration MEDICAL RECORD For:

SMITH, VETERAN | 9/2/1950 | 123456789 | 10987654321V123567

Report Criteria

Dated From: 5/14/2012 To: 8/21/2023

VHA Facilities with Clinical Notes Included in the Report:

589A5   Eastern KS HCS, KS

(589A6) VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System - Dwight D. Eisenhower VA Medical Center, KS

(589GR) Junction City, KS

(589) VA Heartland West (Kansas City MO)

(589G9) Fort Riley, KS

Created On: 09/18/2023 11:56 AM

Report Summary

Sections	Domain Returned	Record Count
Problem List	Yes	9
Diagnosis	Yes	104
Clinical Notes	Yes	126
Vitals	Yes	79
Medications	Yes	54

VHA Medical Record indexes retrieves structured data entered into VAMC systems via Health Data Repository; Testing found this saved 10 minutes per claim on average

VHA Scanned Images includes VA and Community Care medical images retrieved via SCIP service; Testing found this saved 70 minutes per claim on average

Veterans Health Administration Scanned Image
SMITH, VETERAN | 9/2/1950 | 123456789 | 10987654321V123567 | 09/18/2023

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Veterans Health Administration SCANNED IMAGES For:

SMITH, VETERAN | 9/2/1950 | 123456789 | 10987654321 V1234567

Report Criteria

Dated From: 5/15/2012 To: 6/1/2023

VHA Facilities with Images Included in the Report:

5895

5896

(589) VA Heartland West (Kansas City MO)

Created On: 09/18/2023 11:48 AM

Veterans Health Administration Scanned Image
SMITH, VETERAN | 9/2/1950 | 123456789 | 10987654321V123567 | 09/18/2023

Table of Contents

Contents

ADS retrieves, extracts, and indexes medical and service data from both VA Medical Center (VAMC) authoritative sources and the Veteran's previous submissions within their eFolder

- Organizes data from VAMC visits into one easily searchable document
- Extracts and annotates data from structured, unstructured, and semi-structured documents, such as Medical Treatment Records or Private Medical Records
- Identifies Disability Benefit Questionnaires relevant to the claimed condition(s)
- Searches all extracted data for condition diagnosis, symptomatology, and treatment data related to the CFR rating guidance defined by VA and legislation
- Displays data in an Automated Review Summary document organized by relevance and recency of information for decision-making

Choose VA

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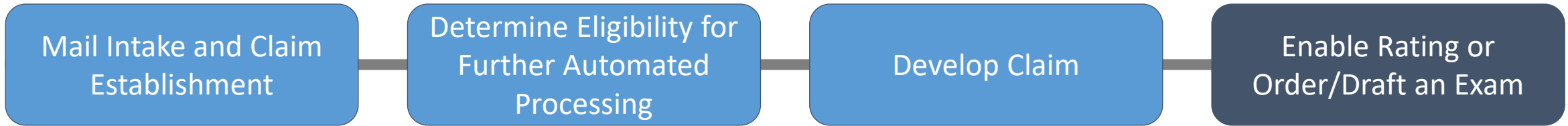
Automated Decision Support Process

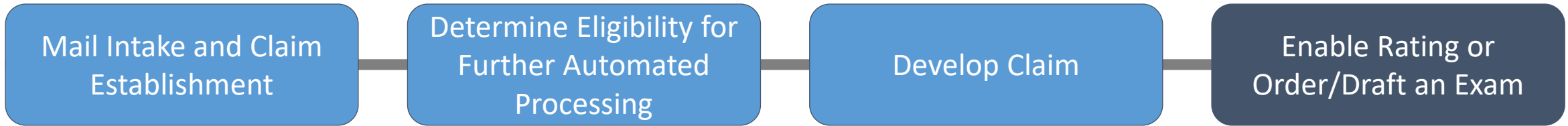| Mail Intake and Claim Establishment	Determine Eligibility for Further Automated Processing	Develop Claim	Enable Rating or Order/Draft an Exam

ADS considers the diagnostic-code specific rating criteria defined by VA and legislation to assess if the indexed data could enable a rating decision
- If relevant data is found within the defined review period, the claim is marked Ready for Decision and routed to a Rating Specialist
- If the data does not meet the defined threshold to support decision making automation will order an exam

ARSD Contention Outcomes

CONTENTION CLAIMED	CONDITION	PROCESSING TYPE	AUTOMATION OUTCOME
Asthma secondary to PACT Act	Asthma	Presumptive	RFD
Outcome Reasoning	Private DBQ Found within 7 Days of Claim Creation		
PTSD secondary to PACT Act	PTSD	Increase	Exam
Outcome Reasoning	No schedular evidence found within review period		

Claim Outcome

CLAIM OUTCOME	OUTCOME REASON
RFD	One or more contentions Ready for Decision

Automated Decision Support Process

Mail Intake and Claim Establishment	Determine Eligibility for Further Automated Processing	Develop Claim	Enable Rating or Order/Draft an Exam

Suspension (Flonase Allergy Relief)

Lansoprazole 15 MG Oral Capsule Delayed Release Take 2 tablets by mouth 2 times daily

Magnesium 250 MG Oral Tablet   TAKE 1 TABLET DAILY.

Norethindrone Acetate 5 MG Oral Tablet   Take 1 tablet by mouth daily. GYN

Symbicort 160-4.5 MCG/ACT Inhalation Aerosol (Budesonide-Formoterol Fumarate)   Use 2 puffs by mouth two times a day

Synthroid 175 MCG Oral Tablet   Take 1 tablet daily

```
annotations = [
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        "annot_val":"Syinbicort [Inhalation Therapy And Bronchodilator]",
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        "medication_frequency":{
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            "Intermittent":None
        },
        "annot_type":"medication"
    },
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Schedular Evidence for Asthma Within the Review Period

EVIDENCE	OBSERVATION DATE	DOCUMENT	PAGE NUMBER(S) / EVENT ID(S)	DOCUMENT ID
Syinbicort [Inhalation Therapy And Bronchodilator]	11/13/2023	Medical Treatment Record - Non-Government Facility	91	800f67b0-edbd-44f7-8e52-7c97e67ad7a2
Budesonide-Formoterol Fumarale [Inhalation Therapy And Bronchodilator]	11/13/2023	Medical Treatment Record - Non-Government Facility	91	800f67b0-edbd-44f7-8e52-7c97e67ad7a2

Choose VA

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