



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MAR 29 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
RESERVE AFFAIRS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
HEALTH AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Cross-Service Support, and Service Organization Role at Disability
Evaluation System (DES) Pilot Locations

Reference: Policy and Procedural Update for the Disability Evaluation System (DES)
Pilot Program, USD (P&R) memorandum dated December 11, 2008

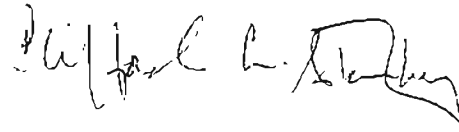
This memorandum provides additional guidance to the Military Departments on Service members needing DES processing at a sister-Service location participating in the DES Pilot. It also requires Military Departments to inform Service members that they can seek assistance in the DES process from VA-approved service organizations.

To ensure Service members have timely and equal access to the DES Pilot, Military Departments will support all military members needing disability processing in military treatment facilities (MTFs) at a sister-Service location. Military Departments will establish inter-Department agreements to ensure these Service members are referred, processed, and counseled in a manner similar to their Service peers. Military Departments should not transfer Service members who are hospitalized or receiving treatment at the MTFs of another uniformed Service merely to complete DES processing.

Military Departments will coordinate cross-Service referrals into the DES and will support and ensure the conduct of a single disability examination and Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) in accordance with DES Pilot examination agreements. The member's Military Department will make MEB and Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) determinations and coordinate the notification of the member and the host Department. Military Department PEBs and/or MEBs are authorized to communicate directly with host MTF's to clarify or obtain additional DES case information.

The guidance at the enclosure ensures that Service members entering the DES are informed that they can seek assistance from VA-approved service organizations during the DES process and provides the VA form Service members use to appoint a claimant representative.

Military Departments will notify DUSD (WWCTP) when implementation actions surrounding these policies are complete. Such implementation guidance is to be promulgated within 30 days.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clifford L. Stanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "C".

Clifford L. Stanley

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs

(Enclosure) Role of Service Organizations in the Disability Evaluation System Pilot

This document establishes policy for the role of service organizations in the Disability Evaluation System (DES) Pilot. The guidance shall be used in conjunction with documents referenced in paragraph 4 of the DES Pilot DTM (November 21, 2007) and the December 11, 2008, Policy and Procedural Update for the DES Pilot. This guidance replaces section 5.1.3.3 of the DES Pilot Operations Manual and adds Enclosure 28 to the December 11, 2008, Policy and Procedural Update for the DES Pilot.

Section 5.1.3.3 of the DES Pilot Operations Manual under the December 11, 2008, Policy and Procedural Update for the DES Pilot is amended to read:

5.1.3.3. Outreach to Stakeholders. Military Departments shall inform Service members upon referral to the DES that they may seek assistance during the DES process from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' approved Service Organizations or State Veterans Agencies listed on the back of VA Form 21-22, Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative. Upon referral to the DES, Military Departments will provide the Service member or duly appointed representative a copy of VA Form 21-22 and ensure the word "Veteran" in Block 1 is deleted and replaced with "Service member." The VA Military Service Coordinator may inform the member that they have the right to seek the advice of other parties in assisting with the member's claim; however, during the initial meeting with the VA Military Service Coordinator, the Service member, duly appointed guardian, or a representative as approved on VA Form 21-22, will complete the VA 29-0819, Part 2.

VA Form 21-22, Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative, dated November 2005 is added to the December 11, 2008, Policy and Procedural Update for the DES Pilot as Enclosure 28.