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THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

**MEMORANDUM FOR:**

SURGEON GENERAL OF THE ARMY  
SURGEON GENERAL OF THE NAVY  
SURGEON GENERAL OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Policy for Disability Evaluation

System and its Interface with the Comprehensive Clinical Evaluation Program  
(CCEP)

In response to concerns by veterans about potential health effects from service during Operation Desert Storm/ Shield, the Department of Defense (DoD) initiated the Comprehensive Clinical Evaluation Program (CCEP) to evaluate service members with physical complaints.

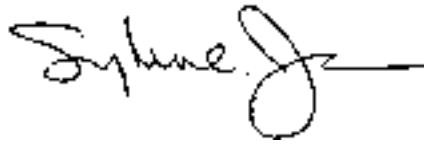
The Physical Evaluations Boards (PEB) in reviewing disability cases have found that findings from the CCEP are often not included in the Medical Boards (MEB) so that these findings cannot be used in adjudicating cases.

Please ensure that the policy established below is implemented immediately.

- A. Individuals identified as not meeting medical retention standards shall have a MEB completed and forwarded to the Service PEB for the condition which does not meet retention standards. CCEP participants who are diagnosed with conditions which do not meet medical retention standards shall receive a MEB and enter the PEB process. Referral of a CCEP participant can occur at any point during the CCEP process if a diagnosis with impairment which does not meet medical retention standards has been identified. However, CCEP participants who have undiagnosed medical complaints and impairments should not be referred to the MEB/PEB until they have completed Phase II of the CCEP clinical protocol. This guidance does not change the previously established criteria that referral for Phase II evaluation is based on the clinical judgment of the CCEP clinician.
  
- B. All disability cases that involve service members who have undergone any part of the CCEP shall

include:

1. A medical board report, or addendum to an original medical board report, with a summary of the CCEP findings
  2. Copies of all CCEP documentation, e.g., test results, consultation reports, et al.
- C. Failure to include the foregoing information in any case referred to the PEB for adjudication shall result in its return to the convening authority.
- D. Cases shall be adjudicated in accordance with Service regulations. Only those diagnoses determined to be unfitting will be rated. Those diagnoses found unfitting shall be rated according to the VASRD section for that diagnosis. The member will be afforded all appeal rights.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen C. Joseph", with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Stephen C. Joseph, M.D., M.P.H.

**HA POLICY 96-026**

cc:

Surgeon General of the Army  
Surgeon General of the Navy  
Surgeon General of the Air Force

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Last update: 12/22/1998