Terrell, Donna, VBAVACO

From: Mayes, Brad, VBAVACO
Sent: Monday,June 26,2000 5:45 PM
To: AD/USB Director Dist.
Cc: ARNOLD, KRISTINE, VBASEAT; Brad Mayes; Charlie Beagles; Cyndi Hill; Fernando Grajales; Gervase, Larry, VBALAX; Henke, Ron, VBASTPL; IHRKE, SUE, VBASFAL; Jennifer Long; John McCourt; McCoy, Jack, VBAINDY; Montgomery Watson; Nicholas, William, VBANWRK; Rasmussen, Jason, VBADENV
Subject: SIPA Team Deliberation Report - 2nd Meeting

SIPA Project Team Deliberation 2 Cover Me

FY 2001 SIPA Budget Initiative.doc

SIPA Team Deliberations - 2nd Meeting.doc

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Washington DC 20420

June 26, 2000

Director (00)
VBA Regional Offices and Centers

Subject: SIPA Project Team Deliberations - 2nd Meeting

1. VBA was successful in securing additional resources in the FY 2001 budget for a new initiative aimed at improving the quality of our claims process. The resources were allocated for Systematic Individual Performance Assessment (SIPA) as described in the attached FY 2001 budget extract.

2. A project team comprised of Station Directors, Service Center Managers, and Union Representatives has been tasked with developing a comprehensive plan for utilizing these resources as described by the budget initiative. The SIPA Project Team had their second meeting in Washington D.C. last week. The Project Team Deliberation Report from this meeting is attached for your review. The Team would like you to review the Deliberation Report and provide any comments or feedback. Please consider this an opportunity to provide input into the development of an individual quality assessment and training program for VBA.

3. All questions and/or comments should be e-mailed directly to Brad Mayes in the Office of Field Operations with a courtesy copy to Montgomery Watson, Director of the Montgomery Regional Office and project team leader. Comments should be e-mailed by close of business on Friday July 7, 2000.

/s/
Michael Walcoff
Associate Deputy Under Secretary
for Operations (West)

/s/
Jim Whitson
Associate Deputy Under Secretary
for Operations (East)

Initiative 6: Systematic Individual Performance Assessment (SIPA) – (New Initiative)

Description of the Initiative: SIPA complements STAR and brings performance assessment and accountability to the journey-level individual. In order to identify individual deficiencies, ensure maintenance of journey-level skills, to promote accuracy and consistency of claims adjudication, and to restore credibility to the system, local management needs a tool to consistently monitor individual performance.

A recent Inspector General's (IG) report identified eighteen internal control vulnerabilities within the Compensation and Pension benefit program which could potentially lead to fraud. Several of the vulnerabilities identified referred to the lack of contemporaneous reviews for disability ratings and adjudication actions.

We believe that systematic individual performance assessments will not only bring accountability to the journey-level individual, but will also serve as an internal control mechanism to minimize the potential for fraud since performance reviews will focus on program and data integrity concerns, proper signatures, supporting documentation, etc.

In order to successfully conduct SIPA, we estimate that about 412,700 cases will have to be reviewed annually by an estimated 328 reviewers. The reviewers will review an annual judgment sample of 100 cases for each journey-level employee in the rating, authorization, and fiduciary activities. Depending on the activity reviewed, each reviewer will either review 1,000 rating actions or 1,500 non-rating actions per year. Expanded reviews will be required if individual performance is found to be deficient. The reviewers will also perform administrative functions (i.e., providing feedback on reviews and maintaining reports) as well as employee development and ongoing training.

All of our C&P initiatives are built on a foundation of improved accuracy. We believe that systematic individual performance assessments are part of that foundation. An estimated 328 reviewers are required to fully implement SIPA. We are requesting 110 FTE in FY 2001.

With full implementation, a 4% performance improvement in accuracy for Core Rating Work, Authorization Work, and Fiduciary Work is anticipated.

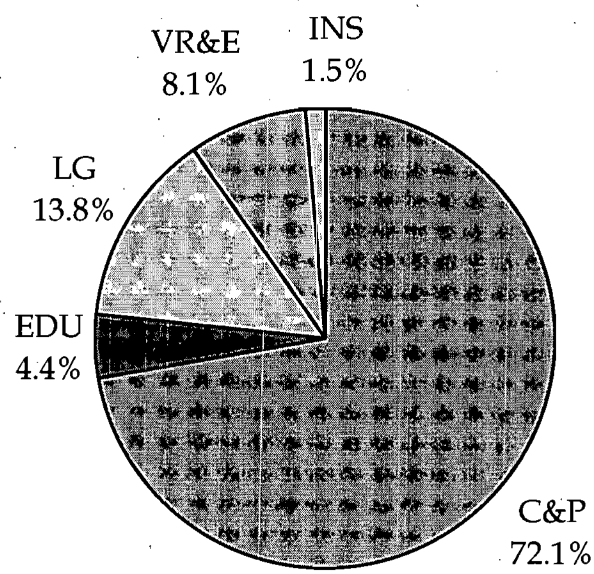
Resource Requirements: $6,250,000 in 2001

Cooperative Support Needed
None

Milestones	Begin Date	End Date
Develop detailed implementation plan	09/99	04/00
Provide instructions and training	05/00	09/00
Implement required review schedule	10/01	Ongoing

Initiatives
This 2001 VBA Business Plan will move the agency toward achieving improved service delivery and sustainable performance. It includes a request of $81.7 million for initiatives targeted at improving performance in response to the needs of our customers and stakeholders. The graph below indicates the percent of initiative funding devoted to each business plan. VBA is committed to improving C&P claims adjudication. Therefore, the majority of the requested initiative funding (nearly $58.9 million) is allocated to achieve improved performance especially in accuracy, timeliness and customer satisfaction with the claims process.

Initiative by Service



The following chart gives a brief idea of the resources and FTE planned for each initiative. Detailed information can be found in each business line.

VBA Initiative Investments ($000)									
		2000				2001			
	Page	Payroll	Non-payroll	Total	FTE	Payroll	Non-payroll	Total	FTE
COMPENSATION & PENSION									
FTE Initiative	2B-20	20,398	4,776	25,174	485	12,187	4,781	16,968	243
TPSS	2B-21	145	4,738	4,883	2		5,200	5,200	
STAR	2B-22	652	148	800	9	2,300	189	2,489	25
Development and Case Management	2B-23			-			1,840	1,840	
Rating Board Automation (RBA) Redesign	2B-24			-			300	300	
Systematic Individual Performance Assessment	2B-25					5,250	1,000	6,250	110
Benefit Payment Replacement System	2B-26					-	2,768	2,768	
TRIP	2B-29		58	58			80	80	
Virtual Service Center	2B-33						100	100	
Establish Claims and Award Screen-Design	2B-35			-			500	500	
Benefits Delivery at Discharge	2B-42	105	895	1,000		75	175	250	-
Personnel Information Exchange (PIE) System	2B-43		191	191			480	480	
Virtual VBA	2B-45		10,000	10,000		876	10,011	10,887	25
Electronic Burial Claims	2B-45			-			370	370	
Conversion to Service Centers			2,384	2,384				-	
Regulation Reform/Rewrite		301	-	301	4			-	
VBA-Wide			418	418		(415)	10,874	10,459	(19)
Compensation and Pension Subtotal		**$21,602**	**$ 23,608**	**$45,210**	**500**	**$20,274**	**$ 38,668**	**$ 58,942**	**384**
EDUCATION									
Enrollment Support	2C-10						500	500	
EDI/EFT	2C-14	(1,313)	400	(913)	(28)		1,000	1,000	
Continuity of Operations Improvement	2C-15			-			500	500	
Computer Based Training	2C-17			-			450	450	
Work Measurement Study	2C-18			-			175	175	
Install Direct Toll-Free Service in the RPO's			900	900				-	
Install Electronic Imaging		(322)	2,250	1,928	(7)			-	
VBA-Wide			52	52			1,012	1,012	
Education Subtotal		**$ (1,635)**	**$ 3,602**	**$ 1,967**	**(35)**	**$ -**	**$ 3,637**	**$ 3,637**	**-**
LOAN GUARANTY									
Vendee Loan Sales	2D-12			-			525	525	
Property Management System Replacement	2D-13			-			750	750	
Vendee Loan Tracking System	2D-13			-			1,400	1,400	
Construction and Valuation (C&V) Redesign	2D-14			-			1,100	1,100	
Mortgage Loan Accounting Center	2D-15						738	738	
Lockbox Funding Fee Replacement	2D-16			-			1,000	1,000	
Online Determination of Eligibility	2D-17			-			750	750	
Training	2D-18		370	370			390	390	
Loan Service and Claims Redesign	2D-8			-			1,200	1,200	
Work Measurement Update	2D-9			-			150	150	
Property Management Improvement				-				-	
Information Warehousing			2,000	2,000				-	
Financial System Improvement			2,000	2,000				-	
Field Restructuring		(910)	500	(410)	(17)			-	
VBA-Wide			170	170			3,291	3,291	
Loan Guaranty Subtotal		**$ (910)**	**$ 5,040**	**$ 4,130**	**(17)**	**$ -**	**$ 11,294**	**$ 11,294**	**-**
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION & EMPLOYMENT									
Evaluate Access	2E-14		208	208		1,080	1,403	2,483	
Employment Services Enhancements and Training	2E-18		150	150			909	909	
WINRS	2E-20			0			1,000	1,000	
Improved Staff Competency	2E-23	0	241	241			396	396	
Develop VR&E as a Learning Organization	2E-27			0			260	260	
Improve Communications		246		246	3			-	
VBA-Wide			81	81			1,586	1,586	
VR&E Subtotal		**$ 246**	**$ 680**	**$ 926**	**3**	**$ 1,080**	**$ 5,554**	**$ 6,634**	**-**

VBA Initiative Investments ($000)		2000				2001			
	Page	Payroll	Non-payroll	Total	FTE	Payroll	Non-payroll	Total	FTE
INSURANCE 1/									
Paperless Office	2F-11	256	1,136	1,392	9	95	101	196	3
Computer Based Training	2F-20	(64)	238	174	(2)	-	880	880	
Consolidation		(772)	(667)	(1,439)	(16)			-	
Self Service			245	245				-	
VBA-Wide			149	149			153	153	
Insurance Subtotal		**$ (580)**	**$ 1,100**	**$ 520**	**(9)**	**$ 95**	**$ 1,134**	**$ 1,229**	**3**
VBA Wide - (non add)									
IT Support Training			400	400				0	
Team Training			470	470				0	
Operational Processing of Benefits Delivery Network	2G-6			0		(415)	5,196	4,781	(19)
One VA Telephone Access	2G-7			0			11,683	11,683	
VBA Wide Subtotal - (non add)		**$ -**	**$ 870**	**$ 870**	**-**	**$ (415)**	**$ 16,879**	**$ 16,464**	**(19)**
TOTAL		**$ 18,723**	**$ 34,030**	**$ 52,753**	**442**	**$ 21,449**	**$ 60,288**	**$ 81,737**	**387**

1/ Note: This Program not funded with appropriated GOE dollars.

SYSTEMATIC INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (SIPA) INITIATIVE

"QUALITY THROUGH TRAINING"

PROJECT TEAM DELIBERATION JUNE 20-21

Team Members

Monty Watson – Team Leader*
Kris Arnold – Director, Seattle
Ron Henke – Director, St. Paul VARO*
William Nicholas – Director, Newark VARO*
Jack McCoy – Assistant Director, Indianapolis VARO*
Larry Gervase – Service Center Manager, Los Angeles VARO*
Sue Ihrke – Service Center Manager, Sioux Falls and Fargo VAMROC*
Bill Bauer – C&P Service STAR Review Staff*
Fernando Grajales – NFFE Representative*
Jason Rasmussen – AFGE Representative*
Dr. Charlie Beagles*
Brad Mayes – Office of Field Operations*

* Designates attendees at the second meeting.

MORNING BRIEFINGS FOR THE GROUP

Bill Bauer and Brad Mayes on Recent IG Findings

Brad and Bill briefed the group on the IG "Rating Consistency Preliminary Findings". The underlying theme was VBA's inability to execute improvement plans.

Dr. Charlie Beagles on TPSS

The TPSS Program is being programmed to capture the amount of hours an individual spends on training. The upgrade is targeted to be functional by June 26th.

Bill Bauer on STAR Review Developments (See Handouts)

Bill briefed the group on new reporting formats for information discovered on STAR review. Specifically, the STAR staff is now reporting data by categories that represent significant areas for improvement.

Tom Pamperin on "Knowledge Couplers"

There are four companies in the private sector that have developed products that aid clinicians in arriving at medical diagnoses based on symptomatology and fact patterns. Past research indicates the best minds can only track twenty facts at one time. Once capacity is reached, the mind will randomly deselect a fact even if this is a key fact. DOD has seized upon this research in the development of a "knowledge coupler" to aid in separation examination procedures. C&P Training staff evaluated the private sector software with positive findings. They are currently building a pilot that should be completed in November to evaluate the software. The pilot will be limited to one body system (Neuropsychiatric). It is envisioned that this software could aid in the accounting of issues and procedures in the proper adjudication of a claim.

Lynne Heltman on Veteran Survey Findings (See Handout)

Lynne indicated that veterans do not perceive quality in the technical way that we do. They perceive "fairness" in terms of the process that let to the decision. A key element of this perception is "technical competency" where we often develop for the same evidence twice. Their perception is that if we don't have the technical competency to keep track of our records, then how can we make complex decisions. They also associate their perception of treatment by VHA with the overall satisfaction in their claim. In summary, customer satisfaction is a reflection of their overall day to day interaction with all levels of the organization.

The group entered into a discussion of how to arrive at a fair sampling of an individual's work while maintaining randomness. Lynne suggested that the sample reflect the types of claims a VSR typically completes over a given period of time. The group felt that a stratified sample would be needed to accomplish this (i.e. the sample would have to reflect the local workload make-up). Lynne indicated that she could come up with examples of samples based on populations.

Dr. Charlie Beagles on Problem Solving Methodology (See Handouts)

Dr. Beagles discussed some conceptual ideas that his group came up with concerning the direction that SIPA could take. He discussed tradeoffs in implementing a comprehensive training program. The handouts provided some insight into a methodology for assessing options. They also grappled with the definition of quality. Does the process result in a product and how do you measure the product? Are there components to the product and can those components be measured?

Paul Koons on Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

Paul addressed the group via telephone concerning incorporation of measures to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. Some key points include:

- Utilize a system generated case selection system
- Training should be designed to help reviewers identify potential fraud, waste, and abuse "markers"
- Ensure the selection criteria is not susceptible to manipulation by unscrupulous employees
- The Team may want to consider adding checklist items to the list of items for review

DEVELOPMENT OF SIPA MODEL COMPONENTS

Define "What" will be Measured Sub-element

Issue	Recommended Decision
Do we include telephone and personal interview activity under SIPA?	Yes, however, uniform nationwide standards must be in place before they are included.

Define "Who" will be Measured and "Who" will do the Reviews – Quality Structure Sub-element

Issue	Recommended Decision
Who will be measured?	Journeyman - DRO, HO, Master Rating Specialist, RVSR, VSR, VCE, VBC, Field VSR, Field Examiner, Legal Instruments Examiner, Other related positions with similar responsibilities
Will any production employees below the journeyman level be reviewed?	No, since the training program should already include an extensive review process.
Will the second signature on a rating decision be subject to review?	No, since we are limiting SIPA to the primary decision-maker
Will the second signature on authorization decisions be subject to review?	Yes
Who performs SIPA reviews?	Trained reviewers selected from the current pool of journeymen in the functional area of the review. A system must be in place to ensure inter-rater reliability. A training program should be offered on a regular basis.
Should the position be permanent or rotational?	Stations should have the flexibility to rotate employees out of this position, however, only after a minimum established cycle of one year.
Who has first line authority over the reviewers?	Service Center Management – this is supported by the fact that these reviews may be used for individual performance management. The alternative discussion surrounded having reviewers reporting to headquarters elements. *
Should reviewers be bargaining or non-bargaining unit employees?	Reviewers should not be in the bargaining unit since some responsibilities will require performance assessment at the individual level outside of the SIPA process.

Should reviewer(s) be located at every station?	Yes
Should reviewers be subject to a certification process?	Yes, after undergoing formal training.
How should reviewers be selected for the position?	According to prescribed personnel procedures. (Detail, temporary promotion, re-assignment, or voluntary change to lower grade, etc.)
Should this position be classified separately?	Yes, with national position descriptions

* Have not reached consensus

Sample/Case Selection Process – Automation Sub-element

Issue	Recommended Decision
How should review cases be selected?	Random samples from each decision-maker's population of cases over a specified period of time.
Should reviews be recorded and counted according to issues?	Yes, the review tool should allow for capturing data by issue.
If reviews are counted by issue, how many issues equate to a case?	**Case Selection System Design Sub-Group**
How frequently should review cases be reviewed for each individual?	**Case Selection System Design Sub-Group**
What tool(s) should be used for the selection of cases? (the tool should incorporate fraud detection methodology)	**Case Selection System Design Sub-Group**
Who is responsible for selecting cases?	**Case Selection System Design Sub-Group**
How will personal interview activity samples be selected?	**Case Selection System Design Sub-Group**
How will telephone activity samples be selected?	**Case Selection System Design Sub-Group**
What tool will be used for actual SIPA reviews? Will the tools be separate for each decision-maker?	**Case Review Checklist Sub-Group**
How should SIPA findings be reported?	**Data Capture/Reporting Sub-Group**
What are the SIPA reporting requirements?	**Data Capture/Reporting Sub-Group**
How will SIPA findings be linked to VBA training databases that are in development?	**Data Capture/Reporting Sub-Group**

At what level in the organization should generic SIPA results be reported? Will these findings be included in the Balanced Scorecard?	The SIPA findings should be reported at all levels of the organization, however, they would not be on VBA's Balanced Scorecard. While the STAR Review would continue to measure organizational quality, SIPA findings may be applicable for employee development.
At what level should an individual employee's name be disassociated with SIPA findings?	At the RO level since this is the only level that would need the data for individualized training.

Recommended SIPA Sub-groups

Case Selection System Design Sub-Group – Bill Bauer with Ron Henke
Case Review Checklist Sub-Group – William Nicholas, Jack McCoy, and Steve Simmons
Data Capture/Reporting Sub-Group – Dr. Charlie Beagles with Sue Ihrke

Training Sub-element

Issue	Recommended Decision
Should SIPA be tied to training?	Yes, this is a fundamental requirement and should precede any individual performance issues.
How will this be tied to current training initiatives?	20TO would coordinate this training with other initiatives.
Will there be a national reviewer training program?	Yes, reviewers must receive national certification.
Should SIPA findings be tied to formal communities of practice?	Yes, communities of practice should be established to ensure national uniformity.
Who will take ownership of the national training program?	20TO would take responsibility for administering the program.
Will there be a SIPA oversight responsibility and who will be responsible for the oversight?	SIPA oversight responsibility should reside with the Deputy Undersecretary for Operations. The Deputy Undersecretary will have discretion to define this oversight element.
How will individual training be documented?	Expand TPSS reporting capabilities.
Will individual training profiles be maintained? Who will maintain these profiles?	Yes – they will be maintained at the Regional Office level.
How will we ensure inter-rater reliability?	20TO will accomplish validation testing of the survey instrument.

Will reviewers be integrally involved in training?	Yes
What are the desired characteristics for our reviewers?	They should not only be technical experts but possess adequate inter-personal communication skills.
Will there be a training program developed for reviewers?	Yes, to ensure consistency in reviews. 20TO will be responsible for developing this program.
How will continuing proficiency levels be maintained?	Reviewers will be required to keep up with current policies and procedures. Reviewers will be required to demonstrate their minimum proficiency levels through testing after two years.
Should SIPA build in an exception procedure for employees who do not agree with called errors?	Yes, exceptions can be challenged at the local level.
Should reviewers be reviewed?	A separate review structure will not be put in place, however, potential problems should surface through the complaint, STAR, and performance review processes.

Implementation/Marketing Sub-element

Issue	Recommended Decision
How would resources be allocated?	Proportional to the number of journeyman FTE at each station.
Would implementation be across all functional areas or phased in by functional area?	Across all functional areas with reduced numbers of reviews commensurate with the addition of SIPA targeted FTE. This may result in less than 100 reviews per employee, initially.
Will local stations be required to continue local STAR reviews?	This should be referred to the Circle Leadership for decision. A position paper will be developed for presentation to the Circle Leadership.
Will there be a pilot program?	No, however, SIPA will be phased in according to resources.

How will marketing of SIPA be accomplished?	1. Regular posting of interim reports 2. Circle Meeting presentations 3. Periodic Hotline updates 4. Conference call with OFO 5. Offer to provide updates at SDN meetings 6. Inclusion of National Partnership in the deliberation process 7. Recommend a all-employee letter from the Under Secretary

Measurement/Standard Sub-element

Issue	Recommended Decision
What will establish the baseline for measurement of improvement as a result of SIPA?	The STAR quality findings at the time of implementation will establish the baseline for measurement of improvement.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Task	Targeted Completion Date	Responsibility
National Labor Discussions	July	OFO/Labor
Develop Position Descriptions	July	Monty Watson
Allocation of FTE	July	OFO
Funding Request for Application Development	July	OFO
SIPA Checklist Development	July	William Nicholas
Review Process/Tools finalized	July	William Nicholas
Draft Report to Leadership	July and Sep	Committee
Presentation to Circle Leadership	July and Sep	Committee
Personnel Selections	Aug	RO
Training Program Development for Reviewers	Aug	20TO
SIPA Database Development	Sep	20TO
Establish Baseline Quality	Sep	RO/OFO
Training Implementation	Oct	20TO

Develop Communities of Practice	Oct	Rita Kowalski
Initiate Reviews	Nov	RO
Cyclical Process Review	Jan	OFO

Terrell, Donna, VBAVACO

From: Mayes, Brad, VBAVACO
Sent: Tuesday,September 26,2000 5:25 PM
To: AD/USB Director Dist.
Cc: ARNOLD, KRISTINE, VBASEAT; Brad Mayes; Charlie Beagles; Cyndi Hill; Fernando Grajales; Gervase, Larry, VBALAX; Henke, Ron, VBASTPL; IHRKE, SUE, VBASFAL; Jennifer Long; John McCourt; McCoy, Jack, VBAINDY; Montgomery Watson; Nicholas, William, VBANWRK; Rasmussen, Jason, VBADENV
Subject: SIPA Follow-up to the Milwaukee Circle Meeting

September 26, 2000

Director (00)
All VA Regional Offices and Centers

The Final "Draft" SIPA Report was briefed to the SDN Leaders at the Milwaukee Circle meeting. As a follow-up to that meeting, the SIPA Team is requesting responses to the following two questions:

1) Should SIPA replace local STAR reviews?

2) Should SIPA be reported on the Balanced Scorecard at the Regional Office level? STAR will continue to be reported at the SDN and National levels.

Also, the 1st generation SIPA checklists are provided for your review. They were not included as an addendum at the time of release of the draft report. Please be advised that these are still undergoing modifications. Comments and/or suggestions are encouraged.

Rating Checklist.doc

Authorization Checklist.doc

Appellate Checklist.doc

FFE Activities field exams.doc

FFE activities accountings.doc

Replies to the questions and comments on the checklists or the Final "Draft" Report should be e-mailed to Montgomery Watson with a copy to Brad Mayes. Replies are requested by close of business on Friday September 29th.
Thank You,
Office of Field Operations

Month of Review________________ Reviewer______________________

Rater: ____________________________ Claim Number:

Regional Office Number: Name:

Individual Quality Review - Rating

	YES	NO	N/A
Well Grounded Claim			
1) Was concept of "Well Grounded Claim" properly addressed?	☐	☐	☐
Proper Development			
2) If the claim is well-grounded, does the record show a timely documented attempt to obtain all indicated evidence (including a VA exam, if required) prior to deciding the claim? *IF NO, SPECIFY DEFICIENCY:* ___Private Medical ___VAMC Records ___Service Records ___VA Exam ___Medical Opinion	☐	☐	☐
3) If a VA examination was requested, was that examination necessary and if an opinion was requested was the opinion an appropriate medical (not legal) question?	☐	☐	☐
4) Was all necessary evidence received prior to deciding the claim; if not, was the claimant properly advised of the evidence requirements before the decision was made and of his/her responsibilities in that regard? *IF NO, SPECIFY DEFICIENCY:* ___Private Medical ___VAMC Records ___Service Records ___VA Exam ___Evidence of Continuity ___Evidence of Presumptive SC	☐	☐	☐
Issues			
5) Were all claimed issues addressed?	☐	☐	☐
6) Were all issues properly stated?	☐	☐	☐
7) Were all inferred issues addressed?	☐	☐	☐
8) Were all ancillary issues addressed?	☐	☐	☐
Evidence			
9) Was all applicable evidence listed?	☐	☐	☐
Decision			
10) Was the grant or denial of all issues correct?	☐	☐	☐
11) Was the percentage evaluation assigned correct?	☐	☐	☐
12) Was the combined evaluation correct?	☐	☐	☐
13) Were all effective dates correct?	☐	☐	☐
Reasons & Bases			
14) Was all applicable evidence discussed?	☐	☐	☐
15) Was the basis of each decision explained?	☐	☐	☐
Jurisdiction			
16) Was proper end product noted under Jurisdiction?	☐	☐	☐
17) Was proper date of claim noted under Jurisdiction?	☐	☐	☐
Coded Conclusion and Miscellaneous			

18) Were all special issues properly flagged for VITAL?	☐	☐	☐
19) Does the Rating Decision contain all required signatures?	☐	☐	☐
20) Was the Power of Attorney indicated and correct?	☐	☐	☐
21) Did the Rating Board properly track case in CAPS?	☐	☐	☐
22) Did the Rating Board properly Case Manage?	☐	☐	☐

FOR EACH "NO" ANSWER RECORDED, PROVIDE A *BRIEF* NARRATIVE SUMMARYOF THE ERROR AND STATUTORY, REGULATION, JUDICIAL OR MANUAL REFERENCES ON THE REVERSE OF THIS FORM.

Regional Office Number:
End Product:
End Product Correct? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Recorded Date of Claim: Actual Date of Claim:

Claim Number:
Name:

INDIVIDUAL QUALITY REVIEW—Authorization

	YES	NO	N/A
Well Grounded Claim			
A) Was concept of "Well Grounded Claim" properly addressed?	☐	☐	☐
Address All Issues			
B1) Were all claimed issues addressed?	☐	☐	☐
B2) Were all inferred issues addressed?	☐	☐	☐
Proper Development			
C1) If the claim is well-grounded, does the record show a documented attempt to obtain all indicated evidence prior to deciding the claim?	☐	☐	☐
C2) Was all necessary evidence received prior to deciding the claim; if not, was the claimant properly advised of the evidence requirements before the decision was made and of his/her responsibilities in that regard?	☐	☐	☐
Income Issues			
D1) Was Net Worth determination correct?	☐	☐	☐
D2) Was income counted in the correct reporting period?	☐	☐	☐
D3) Was total family income counted properly?	☐	☐	☐
D4) Were all deductions including unreimbursed medical expenses calculated correctly ?	☐	☐	☐
Dependency Issues			
E1) Was a dependent spouse correctly established?	☐	☐	☐
E2) Were dependent children correctly established?	☐	☐	☐
E3) Were dependent parents correctly established?	☐	☐	☐
E4) Was a surviving spouse correctly established?	☐	☐	☐
E5) Were surviving children correctly established?	☐	☐	☐
E6) Were SSNs on record for all dependents?	☐	☐	☐
E7) Were required formal apportionment decisions completed and correct?	☐	☐	☐
Burial Issues			
F1) Was the proper claimant paid?	☐	☐	☐
F2) Were transportation charges applied correctly?	☐	☐	☐
F3) Was the Burial/Plot/Headstone payment correct?	☐	☐	☐
F4) Was an FNOD done?	☐	☐	☐
F5) Was a Presidential Memorial Certificate offered?	☐	☐	☐
Accrued Benefits Issues			
G1) Was the proper claimant paid?	☐	☐	☐
G2) Was the correct amount paid?	☐	☐	☐

Hospital Adjustments			
H1) Was the reduction, or suspension, correct?	☐	☐	☐
H2) Was restoration of benefits correct?	☐	☐	☐
H3) Was F&FE Unit notified of patient's hospitalization?	☐	☐	☐

Due Process Issues			
I1) Was a predetermination notice sent?	☐	☐	☐
I2) Was the notice fully informative?	☐	☐	☐
I3) Was claimant given 60 days before the due process period expired?	☐	☐	☐
Effective Dates			
J) Are all payment dates correct?	☐	☐	☐
Denials			
K1) Was all applicable evidence discussed?	☐	☐	☐
K2) Was the basis of each decision explained?	☐	☐	☐
Notification			
L1) Was notification sent?	☐	☐	☐
L2) Was the Power of Attorney indicated and correct?	☐	☐	☐
L3) Was the notification correct?	☐	☐	☐
L4) Were appeal rights included?	☐	☐	☐

FOR EACH "NO" ANSWER RECORDED, PROVIDE A *BRIEF* NARRATIVE SUMMARYOF THE ERROR AND MANUAL, REGULATORY, JUDICIAL OR STATUTORY REFERENCES ON THE REVERSE OF THIS FORM.

Systematic Technical Accuracy Review
Compensation & Pension Service
Narrative Summary of Error(s)

End Product: **Claim Number:**

Benefit Type: **Name:**

NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF EACH ERROR ("NO" ANSWER ON FRONT PAGE) AND MANUAL, REGULATORY, JUDICIAL OR STATUTORY REFERENCE

REMARKS

DATE **LOCATION: VACO**

ACTION TAKEN BY REGIONAL OFFICE

DATE **SIGNATURE** **TITLE**

Name: ____________ Board Member: __________________
ID: ____________ Team: __________________
Date of Review: ____________
Issues (Number and Type): ______________________________________

Difficulty: Easy ☐ Average ☐ Difficult ☐

Individual Quality Review - Appellate

	YES	NO	N/A
Due Process			
1) Was jurisdiction correctly assumed?	☐	☐	☐
2) Was the concept of "Well Grounded Claim" properly addressed?	☐	☐	☐
3) Were all duty to assist issues identified and properly accounted for?	☐	☐	☐
4) If a SOC was required, was it issued and was it correct and complete?	☐	☐	☐
Hearings			
5) Were all hearing requests properly addressed?	☐	☐	☐
6) If an informal hearing was conducted, was it properly documented in the record?	☐	☐	☐
Issues			
7) Were all issues identified and considered?	☐	☐	☐
8) Were any new issues not under DRO jurisdiction referred to the appropriate activity for action?	☐	☐	☐
Proper Development			
9) If the claim was well grounded, does the record show a documented attempt to obtain all indicated evidence prior to deciding the claim?	☐	☐	☐
10) Was all necessary evidence received prior to deciding this claim? If not, is there documented evidence to show that the claimant was given an opportunity to obtain and submit this evidence?	☐	☐	☐
11) If a VA exam was requested, was the exam necessary and if an opinion was requested, was the opinion an appropriate medical, rather than legal question?	☐	☐	☐
Grant or Deny			
12) Was the grant or denial of all issues correct?	☐	☐	☐
13) Was the percentage of evaluations assigned correct?	☐	☐	☐
Effective Dates			
14) Are all effective dates affecting payment correct?	☐	☐	☐
Reasons and Bases			
15) Was all pertinent evidence identified and discussed, to include evidence for and against the claim?	☐	☐	☐
16) Were all pertinent laws and regulations set forth and properly applied?	☐	☐	☐
17) Was a clear explanation provided as to how the DRO reached his/her decision (weighed the evidence)?	☐	☐	☐

Regional Office Number:

End Product:

Claim Number:

Veteran's Name:

INDIVIDUAL QUALITY REVIEW—F&FE Activities (Field Examinations)

	YES	NO	N/A
Rights - Welfare			
1) Was VA rating of incompetency or a legal disability verified?	☐	☐	☐
2) Was capacity to handle funds fully and factually developed?	☐	☐	☐
3) Were appropriate referrals made when beneficiary was found to be competent?	☐	☐	☐
4) Were welfare and needs of beneficiary and dependents addressed?	☐	☐	☐
Benefits			
5) Was action taken to suspend benefits under 38 CFR 3.557?	☐	☐	☐
6) Was fiduciary alerted to elect benefits (pension vs. comp, military retired pay, etc)?	☐	☐	☐
7) Was fiduciary alerted to potential entitlement to housebound/aid & attendance?	☐	☐	☐
8) Was fiduciary alerted to possible pension adjustment due to medical expenses?	☐	☐	☐
9) Was information provided on medical services available through VA?	☐	☐	☐
10) Was information provided on other relevant VA benefits (CHAMPVA, DEA, etc)?	☐	☐	☐
Fiduciary Supervision			
11) Was fiduciary type fully justified as serving the beneficiary's best interests?	☐	☐	☐
12) Were fiduciary's qualifications or continued suitability investigated or confirmed?	☐	☐	☐
13) Were beneficiary assets held by fiduciary verified in non-accounting cases?	☐	☐	☐
14) Were current expenses documented and, when necessary, verified?	☐	☐	☐
15) Were specific authorizations given by field examiner for use of VA funds?	☐	☐	☐
16) Was the recommendation for or continuation of federal fiduciary fees justified?	☐	☐	☐
Other Issues			
17) Was future contact appropriately scheduled with justification?	☐	☐	☐
18) Should alternate supervision contact been made in lieu of a personal visit?	☐	☐	☐
19) Were Fiduciary Program forms accurately completed with necessary information?	☐	☐	☐
20) On nonprogram cases, was reasonably obtainable best evidence fully developed?	☐	☐	☐

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Regional Office Number:
End Product:

Claim Number:
Veteran's Name:

INDIVIDUAL QUALITY REVIEW—F&FE Activities (Accountings)

	YES	NO	N/A
Verification			
1) Was accounting the original or a certified true copy?	☐	☐	☐
2) Was accounting signed and for the correct period?	☐	☐	☐
3) Was ending balance on prior accounting compared with the opening balance?	☐	☐	☐
4) Was VA income verified?	☐	☐	☐
5) Was an independent computation of figures on the accounting performed?	☐	☐	☐
6) Were the balances on deposit in financial institutions properly verified?	☐	☐	☐
Analysis			
7) When necessary, were expenditures verified by receipts or canceled checks?	☐	☐	☐
8) Were unusual or inappropriate expenditures questioned?	☐	☐	☐
9) Were fiduciary commissions properly authorized by court or by VA?	☐	☐	☐
10) Were apparent illegal or excessive attorney fees referred to Regional Counsel?	☐	☐	☐
11) Were imprudent investments by court fiduciaries referred to Regional Counsel?	☐	☐	☐
12) Was surety bond adequate to protect VA estate and VA income for ensuing year?	☐	☐	☐
13) Were investments by federal fiduciaries proper?	☐	☐	☐
Benefits & Welfare			
14) Should benefits be suspended under 38 CFR 3.557?	☐	☐	☐
15) Was fiduciary alerted to elect benefits (pension vs. comp, military retired pay, etc)?	☐	☐	☐
16) Was fiduciary alerted to possible VA pension rate discrepancies?	☐	☐	☐
17) Was fiduciary alerted to relevant benefits (CHAMPVA, DEA, insurance waivers)?	☐	☐	☐
18) Should a recommendation have been made to reassess beneficiary allowances?	☐	☐	☐
19) Should a recommendation have been made to reassess dependent allowances ?	☐	☐	☐
Estate Management			
20) Was the future accounting properly scheduled in the FBS system?	☐	☐	☐
21) Was the FBS system updated with current information?	☐	☐	☐
22) Does VAF 27-4707 (estate summary) contain complete and accurate information?	☐	☐	☐
23) Are PGF files properly organized and free of obsolete and unnecessary material?	☐	☐	☐

FOR EACH "NO" ANSWER RECORDED, PROVIDE A *BRIEF* NARRATIVE SUMMARYOF THE ERROR AND MANUAL, REGULATORY, JUDICIAL OR STATUTORY REFERENCES ON THE REVERSE OF THIS FORM.

Terrell, Donna, VBAVACO

From: Mayes, Brad, VBAVACO
Sent: Monday,June 26,2000 5:45 PM
To: AD/USB Director Dist.
Cc: ARNOLD, KRISTINE, VBASEAT; Brad Mayes; Charlie Beagles; Cyndi Hill; Fernando Grajales; Gervase, Larry, VBALAX; Henke, Ron, VBASTPL; IHRKE, SUE, VBASFAL; Jennifer Long; John McCourt; McCoy, Jack, VBAINDY; Montgomery Watson; Nicholas, William, VBANWRK; Rasmussen, Jason, VBADENV
Subject: SIPA Team Deliberation Report - 2nd Meeting

SIPA Project Team Deliberation 2 Cover Me

FY 2001 SIPA Budget Initiative.doc

SIPA Team eliberations - 2nd Meeting.do

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Washington DC 20420

June 26, 2000

Director (00)
VBA Regional Offices and Centers

Subject: SIPA Project Team Deliberations - 2nd Meeting

1. VBA was successful in securing additional resources in the FY 2001 budget for a new initiative aimed at improving the quality of our claims process. The resources were allocated for Systematic Individual Performance Assessment (SIPA) as described in the attached FY 2001 budget extract.

2. A project team comprised of Station Directors, Service Center Managers, and Union Representatives has been tasked with developing a comprehensive plan for utilizing these resources as described by the budget initiative. The SIPA Project Team had their second meeting in Washington D.C. last week. The Project Team Deliberation Report from this meeting is attached for your review. The Team would like you to review the Deliberation Report and provide any comments or feedback. Please consider this an opportunity to provide input into the development of an individual quality assessment and training program for VBA.

3. All questions and/or comments should be e-mailed directly to Brad Mayes in the Office of Field Operations with a courtesy copy to Montgomery Watson, Director of the Montgomery Regional Office and project team leader. Comments should be e-mailed by close of business on Friday July 7, 2000.

/s/
Michael Walcoff
Associate Deputy Under Secretary
for Operations (West)

/s/
Jim Whitson
Associate Deputy Under Secretary
for Operations (East)

Initiative 6: Systematic Individual Performance Assessment (SIPA) - (New Initiative)

Description of the Initiative: SIPA complements STAR and brings performance assessment and accountability to the journey-level individual. In order to identify individual deficiencies, ensure maintenance of journey-level skills, to promote accuracy and consistency of claims adjudication, and to restore credibility to the system, local management needs a tool to consistently monitor individual performance.

A recent Inspector General's (IG) report identified eighteen internal control vulnerabilities within the Compensation and Pension benefit program which could potentially lead to fraud. Several of the vulnerabilities identified referred to the lack of contemporaneous reviews for disability ratings and adjudication actions.

We believe that systematic individual performance assessments will not only bring accountability to the journey-level individual, but will also serve as an internal control mechanism to minimize the potential for fraud since performance reviews will focus on program and data integrity concerns, proper signatures, supporting documentation, etc.

In order to successfully conduct SIPA, we estimate that about 412,700 cases will have to be reviewed annually by an estimated 328 reviewers. The reviewers will review an annual judgment sample of 100 cases for each journey-level employee in the rating, authorization, and fiduciary activities. Depending on the activity reviewed, each reviewer will either review 1,000 rating actions or 1,500 non-rating actions per year. Expanded reviews will be required if individual performance is found to be deficient. The reviewers will also perform administrative functions (i.e., providing feedback on reviews and maintaining reports) as well as employee development and ongoing training.

All of our C&P initiatives are built on a foundation of improved accuracy. We believe that systematic individual performance assessments are part of that foundation. An estimated 328 reviewers are required to fully implement SIPA. We are requesting 110 FTE in FY 2001.

With full implementation, a 4% performance improvement in accuracy for Core Rating Work, Authorization Work, and Fiduciary Work is anticipated.

Resource Requirements: $6,250,000 in 2001

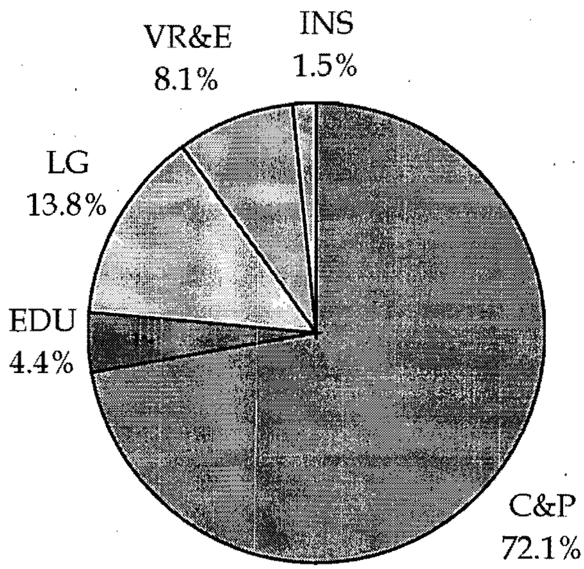
Cooperative Support Needed
None

Milestones	Begin Date	End Date
Develop detailed implementation plan	09/99	04/00
Provide instructions and training	05/00	09/00
Implement required review schedule	10/01	Ongoing

Initiatives

This 2001 VBA Business Plan will move the agency toward achieving improved service delivery and sustainable performance. It includes a request of $81.7 million for initiatives targeted at improving performance in response to the needs of our customers and stakeholders. The graph below indicates the percent of initiative funding devoted to each business plan. VBA is committed to improving C&P claims adjudication. Therefore, the majority of the requested initiative funding (nearly $58.9 million) is allocated to achieve improved performance especially in accuracy, timeliness and customer satisfaction with the claims process.

Initiative by Service



The following chart gives a brief idea of the resources and FTE planned for each initiative. Detailed information can be found in each business line.

VBA Initiative Investments ($000)

		2000				2001			
	Page	Payroll	Non-payrol	Total	FTE	Payroll	Non-payrol	Total	FTE
COMPENSATION & PENSION									
FTE Initiative	2B-20	20,398	4,776	25,174	485	12,187	4,781	16,968	243
TPSS	2B-21	145	4,738	4,883	2		5,200	5,200	
STAR	2B-22	652	148	800	9	2,300	189	2,489	25
Development and Case Management	2B-23			-			1,840	1,840	
Rating Board Automation (RBA) Redesign	2B-24			-			300	300	
Systematic Individual Performance Assessment	2B-25					5,250	1,000	6,250	110
Benefit Payment Replacement System	2B-26					-	2,768	2,768	
TRIP	2B-29		58	58			80	80	
Virtual Service Center	2B-33						100	100	
Establish Claims and Award Screen-Design	2B-35			-			500	500	
Benefits Delivery at Discharge	2B-42	105	895	1,000		75	175	250	-
Personnel Information Exchange (PIE) System	2B-43		191	191			480	480	
Virtual VBA	2B-45		10,000	10,000		876	10,011	10,887	25
Electronic Burial Claims	2B-45			-			370	370	
Conversion to Service Centers			2,384	2,384				-	
Regulation Reform/Rewrite		301	-	301	4			-	
VBA-Wide			418	418		(415)	10,874	10,459	(19)
Compensation and Pension Subtotal		**$21,602**	**$ 23,608**	**$45,210**	**500**	**$20,274**	**$ 38,668**	**$ 58,942**	**384**
EDUCATION									
Enrollment Support	2C-10						500	500	
EDI/EFT	2C-14	(1,313)	400	(913)	(28)		1,000	1,000	
Continuity of Operations Improvement	2C-15			-			500	500	
Computer Based Training	2C-17			-			450	450	
Work Measurement Study	2C-18			-			175	175	
Install Direct Toll-Free Service in the RPO's			900	900				-	
Install Electronic Imaging		(322)	2,250	1,928	(7)			-	
VBA-Wide			52	52			1,012	1,012	
Education Subtotal		**$ (1,635)**	**$ 3,602**	**$ 1,967**	**(35)**	**$ -**	**$ 3,637**	**$ 3,637**	**-**
LOAN GUARANTY									
Vendee Loan Sales	2D-12			-			525	525	
Property Management System Replacement	2D-13			-			750	750	
Vendee Loan Tracking System	2D-13			-			1,400	1,400	
Construction and Valuation (C&V) Redesign	2D-14			-			1,100	1,100	
Mortgage Loan Accounting Center	2D-15						738	738	
Lockbox Funding Fee Replacement	2D-16			-			1,000	1,000	
Online Determination of Eligibility	2D-17			-			750	750	
Training	2D-18		370	370			390	390	
Loan Service and Claims Redesign	2D-8			-			1,200	1,200	
Work Measurement Update	2D-9			-			150	150	
Property Management Improvement				-				-	
Information Warehousing			2,000	2,000				-	
Financial System Improvement			2,000	2,000				-	
Field Restructuring		(910)	500	(410)	(17)			-	
VBA-Wide			170	170			3,291	3,291	
Loan Guaranty Subtotal		**$ (910)**	**$ 5,040**	**$ 4,130**	**(17)**	**$ -**	**$ 11,294**	**$ 11,294**	**-**
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION & EMPLOYMENT									
Evaluate Access	2E-14		208	208		1,080	1,403	2,483	
Employment Services Enhancements and Training	2E-18		150	150			909	909	
WINRS	2E-20			0			1,000	1,000	
Improved Staff Competency	2E-23	0	241	241			396	396	
Develop VR&E as a Learning Organization	2E-27			0			260	260	
Improve Communications		246		246	3			-	
VBA-Wide			81	81			1,586	1,586	
VR&E Subtotal		**$ 246**	**$ 680**	**$ 926**	**3**	**$ 1,080**	**$ 5,554**	**$ 6,634**	**-**

VBA Initiative Investments ($000)

	Page	2000				2001			
		Payroll	Non-payroll	Total	FTE	Payroll	Non-payroll	Total	FTE
INSURANCE 1/									
Paperless Office	2F-11	256	1,136	1,392	9	95	101	196	3
Computer Based Training	2F-20	(64)	238	174	(2)	-	880	880	
Consolidation		(772)	(667)	(1,439)	(16)			-	
Self Service			245	245				-	
VBA-Wide			149	149			153	153	
Insurance Subtotal		**$ (580)**	**$ 1,100**	**$ 520**	**(9)**	**$ 95**	**$ 1,134**	**$ 1,229**	**3**
VBA Wide - (non add)									
IT Support Training			400	400				0	
Team Training			470	470				0	
Operational Processing of Benefits Delivery Network	2G-6			0		(415)	5,196	4,781	(19)
One VA Telephone Access	2G-7			0			11,683	11,683	
VBA Wide Subtotal - (non add)		**$ -**	**$ 870**	**$ 870**	**-**	**$ (415)**	**$ 16,879**	**$ 16,464**	**(19)**
TOTAL		**$ 18,723**	**$ 34,030**	**$ 52,753**	**442**	**$ 21,449**	**$ 60,288**	**$ 81,737**	**387**

1/ Note: This Program not funded with appropriated GOE dollars.