



Automated Decision Support & Veteran Service Officers FAQ

Q: What is Automated Decision Support (ADS)?

A: Automated Decision Support (ADS) utilizes available technology to automate specific areas of development within the claim cycle. Our team worked with partners in the Office of Business Integration (OBI) as well as the Office of Information and Technology (OIT) to analyze the claim process and determine which parts of processing a claim were best suited for automation.

ADS is not end-to-end automation. Instead, it focuses on the administrative activities leading up to the claim decision that will allow the claims processors to focus on more complex and analytical duties. Claims processors will maintain full adjudicative discretion in making claim decisions. The goal of ADS is to provide faster and more consistent decisions, enhance the customer experience for Veterans and their beneficiaries and provide claims processors with industry-leading solutions to optimize performance.

Q: Is ADS end-to-end automation?

A: No. ADS provides users decision-support tools to assist with claim development tasks. When a claim is established with automation-eligible contentions, automation logic is processed to generate an Automated Review Summary Document (ARSD) and order an examination or generate a draft examination request. Claims processors must still take manual action to validate the claim, review the eFolder, and make the final decision on the claim.

Q: How do I know if a claim has been impacted by ADS?

A: Once an automation-eligible contention has been processed through automated technology, an ARSD will be available in the VBMS eFolder. The ARSD will detail the contentions impacted by ADS.

Q: What is the benefit of ADS for Veterans and their family members?

A: This employee efficiency positively impacts service to Veterans ensuring they receive accurate, consistent, and equitable claims decisions.

Q: What is the ARSD?

A: The ARSD is a decision-support tool used to identify documents in the Veteran's eFolder to support claims processors in their review. ADS technology retrieves and consolidates medical records and evidence gathered through a query of the VBMS eFolder. This summary document contains indexed and prioritized information that can be used as a tool by claims processors when making decisions.

Ready for Decision (RFD), Open, and Exam automation logic has been refined to rely on structured medical data with the expectation of yielding highly reliable ADS outcomes. Utilizing structured medical data increases the reliability of the ARSD. Once all relevant structured medical data has been downloaded, automation will review for any diagnostic terms, symptoms, medications, procedures, treatments, and lab results that VBA has identified as relevant for each automated diagnostic code. ADS uses these requirements to search for the information and populate it within the ARSD as schedular evidence or other medical evidence.

To support claims processors, the ARSD contains a table listing the claimed contentions, the ADS processing type, the outcome ADS determined for that contention, and the Veteran data ADS used to reach that outcome. The ARSD will not provide evidence for claimed contentions that are automation-ineligible. For multi-issue claims, the ARSD lists any conditions not processed under ADS and explains why automation did not review them.

VBA regularly solicits feedback from claims processors to enhance and update the ARSD. Updates are deployed every two weeks, and claims processors are notified about all changes in Release Notes.

Q: How does ADS impact my service to Veterans?

A: ADS does not significantly impact the great service you provide to Veterans. If you have access to VBMS, you may see the ARSD within certain Veteran eFolders. You may view the ARSD to review the evidence ADS located and presented to VBA claims processors. You may want to utilize the ARSD, if available, when attempting to locate specific medical or military service information within the Veteran's VBMS eFolder.

Q: What should I do if I have additional questions on ADS?

A: Questions related to ADS, or ADS claims status, can be forwarded to your local regional office. You may also visit [ABD Home \(va.gov\)](https://abd.home.va.gov) for more information about ADS, the ARSD, and other tools supporting automation and claims processors. For a closer look at the ARSD, please see the ARSD Fact Sheet located in this toolkit.