

Automated Decision Support (ADS)

VSO Quick Reference Guide

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) recognizes the critical role Veterans Service Officers (VSOs) play in supporting our Veterans. The purpose of this quick reference guide is to provide VSOs information to explain the Automated Decision Support (ADS) process to the Veterans they serve.

Automated Decision Support

The goal of ADS is to provide faster, consistent, and equitable claims decisions which enhance the customer experience for Veterans and their beneficiaries and create a better user experience for processors. ADS is not end-to-end automation; instead, it focuses on the administrative activities leading up to the claim decision that frees claims processors' time for more complex and analytical duties. Claims processors will maintain full adjudicative discretion in making claim decisions. ADS technology retrieves and consolidates medical records and evidence gathered through a query of the VBMS eFolder. It provides a summary document of indexed and prioritized information that can be used as a tool by claims processor when making decisions.

This information is automatically categorized and placed in an Automated Review Summary Document (ARSD). The data is processed through automation tools to determine if sufficient medical evidence is available to decide the claim. If sufficient medical evidence for rating purposes is found, the claim is marked Ready for Decision (RFD) and routed to a Rating Veterans Service Representative (RVSR) for review. If there is not enough medical evidence to decide the claim, automation will either submit an examination through VBMS Exam Management System or generate a draft examination for review by the claims processor.

RFD, Open, and Exam automation logic have been refined to rely on structured medical data. Structured medical data has shown to yield highly reliable ADS outcomes and save valuable time for claims processors.



Automated Review Summary Document

The ARSD is a decision support tool used to identify evidence to support claims processors in their review. The ARSD now contains hyperlinks which allows a user to navigate directly to a document in VBMS.

The ARSD has been redesigned, incorporating feedback from the claims processors, to make it a more usable product that adds value to the claims process and prioritizes decision-making information on the first page. The document begins with a contention outcome table that contains four columns. The first column includes the contention as it is claimed by the Veteran or claimant, the condition we are considering for the purposes of automation, the processing type, and finally automation outcome. This can be helpful to serve as a roadmap of what automation did and why. For multi-issue claims, a 'contentions not processed under ADS' table is also included.

A military service location table can be found just after the table of contents. This table identifies location keywords associated with relevant military service for presumptive conditions found in the VBMS eFolder. This will assist in the verification of service for presumptive conditions.

The most valuable decision-making information is displayed first on the ARSD. Instead of grouping the document into sections, the document is grouped by condition for easier use by rating specialists. For each condition, a diagnosis table identifies the oldest and most recent diagnosis for each presumptive condition. Scheduling evidence is also listed as well as scheduling evidence outside of the review period. Other medical evidence is listed in a separate table. This approach reflects feedback received to prioritize the most important information.

ADS tools retrieve structured medical data, such as medical codes associated with diagnostic testing codes, imaging studies, laboratory analysis, and other medical information. Those codes are translated to the relevant clinical evidence that leads to the information needed to process the claim. In addition, ADS tools have fully automated records retrieval of VHA VistA documents, including VistA imaging documents which were previously manually uploaded using CAPRI and JLV. This reduced processing and review time immediately allowed more claims to be worked and vastly decreased duplication of records in the VBMS eFolder.

The ARSD can be used as part of evidence review, but claims processors must take manual action to validate the claim, review the eFolder, and make a final decision on the claim.

To learn more about the ARSD, please visit the [ARSD Fact Sheet for VSOs](#).

Diagnostic Codes Eligible for Automated Review

As of December 5, 2022, all 26 PACT Act conditions are automation-eligible. Please visit the Automated Benefits Delivery intranet to find a full list of diagnostic codes currently automation-eligible. VBA continues to identify additional diagnostic codes for automation.

Learn More about ADS Tools

Find additional resources to continue learning about [ADS](#).

Read the ADS Frequently Asked Questions located in this toolkit.

Learn more about the ARSD in the Fact Sheet located in this toolkit.

Learn more about [Automated Data Ingestion](#).

Learn more about [eFolder Modernization](#).

Learn more about [Smart Search](#).

