Dear XXXXXX,

I wanted to let you know that I’ve submitted your claim to VA and now we wait for the next steps of your claim.

This time can be stressful, as most are unsure of what to expect during the claims process.

For this reason, I wanted to provide you with what to expect now that your claim has been submitted.

Within the next week or so you will receive a confirmation letter from the VA (either by mail or electronically through VA.gov if you're signed up) letting you know they’ve received your claim. This starts the **Initial Review** phase, where a VA representative verifies all required forms and evidence were submitted.

Next, your claim will move into the **Evidence Gathering** stage. During this time:

* VA may request more medical records, both from VA facilities and private providers (if applicable).
* You might get a call or letter asking for additional documentation. If this happens, contact me immediately so we can respond quickly.
* You’ll likely be scheduled for one or more **Compensation & Pension (C&P) Exams**.

C&P Exams are conducted by a VA clinician or a third-party contractor (like QTC, LHI, or VES) and are critical to your claim.

Here’s what you need to know:

* **Purpose:** To assess the severity and service connection of your condition.
* **Scheduling:** You’ll receive a call, letter, or email about the exam appointment. Let me know when it's scheduled.
* **Bring:** Any assistive devices you use (braces, canes, Medical Journals etc.).
* **Be Honest and Specific:** Describe how your condition affects your daily life and ability to work. Don't downplay symptoms and if you can avoid pain management medications the day before hand without it harming your health it will help give a better read.
* **Consistency Matters:** Be consistent with what you've reported on your claim and what you tell the examiner.
* **Functional Impact:** Talk about pain, fatigue, limitations in movement, mental health impacts, and how it affects your job, sleep, relationships, etc.

If you feel rushed or like something wasn’t properly evaluated, **let me know right away** so we can submit a correction or request clarification.

Somewhere between 1-4 months after your exams, VA enters the **Review of Evidence** stage, analyzing everything in your file, including your exam reports.

Then, they move to the **Preparation for Decision** and **Pending Decision Approval** phases.

Once a final decision is made, you’ll receive a **Rating Decision Letter** outlining each condition, whether it was granted, denied or deferred, meaning VA will make another decision for that deferred condition. While VA will say that I was CCed in this notification, I was not so please if you have questions about your notification letter, contact me.

Most initial claims take 4–6 months from submission to decision, though some may be faster or slower depending on exam scheduling and evidence review. If you have not received a rating decision 6 months after we submit your claim, please reach back out to me to check your status.

Thank you (OR YOUR FAMILY MEMBER IF A SURIVING SPOUSE) for your service to our Great Nation and I hope you have a great day!