

AR-1

Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: June 24, 2019 – June 28, 2019

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019

<u>Standard:</u>	Category 1: Payment Processing
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<u>Number of cases reviewed:</u>	52
<u>Acceptable rating:</u>	90%
<u>Rating for review:</u>	100%

Describe Findings:

With respect to Seattle District Office, there were no payment processing errors found. The Seattle District Office's performance in this category was outstanding.

REVIEWER(S)	DATE
Rodney Alston, Kristina Green, Danny Hemphill, Kathryn Jimmerson, William Pridy, Barry Davidson, Kimberly Bender, Lisa Slattery, Robert Connelly, Sherri Murphy, Patrick Haswell	June 27, 2019

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Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: June 24, 2019 – June 28, 2019

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019

Standard:	Category 2: Part E Causation Claims Element 1: Development and Causation Assessment Element 2: Outcome and Written Quality
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Number of cases reviewed	41
Rating for Element #1	94%
Rating for Element #2	93%
Acceptable rating:	90%
Overall Category Rating:	94%

Summarize Category (or Element) Findings:

For Element 1, the reviewers identified eleven errors. In one case, the reviewer did not find any development letters within the case record. In the second case, the Claims Examiner (CE) did not send a development letter for all claimed conditions. Three cases were missing Contract Medical Consultant (CMC) referral reports. The reviewers found that although the CMC reports were discussed within the recommended decision (RD), they were not part of the case record or listed as one of the enclosures. In two other cases, the CE either did not conduct a proper Site Exposure Matrix (SEM) search, or did not include the SEM search in the Industrial Hygienist referral packet. Lastly, two cases involved the misapplication of asbestosis presumption standards.

For Element 2, deficiencies in this element included four cases which contained errors in the factual information of the cover letter or recommended decision. These errors included an incorrect post office box number in the cover letter, an incorrect case ID in the waiver form, an incorrect zip code in the RD, and an incorrect issue date of a RD.

In one case, the error involved the cover letter not accurately summarizing the decision outcome for a recommended acceptance or denial of the claim.

Significantly, reviewers found eight cases deficient due to a lack of development actions or a deficient explanation as to what development actions were undertaken and how the result of those actions impacted the outcome of the case. In one case, the deficiency noted that critical information which impacted decision outcome was missing from the Statement of the Case (SOC). Reviewers noted two other cases where the chronology of the SOC was out of sequence.

Lastly, three cases were deficient due to their lack of a clear discussion regarding the collection and assessment of exposure evidence and how the CE's interpretation of the evidence affected the outcome of the case.

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Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: June 24, 2019 – June 28, 2019

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019

Standard:	Category 3: Post Remand/Reopening Adjudication Element 1: Post Remand/ Reopening Development Element 2: Recommended Decisions – Outcome and Written Quality
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Number of cases reviewed	47
Rating for Element #1	98%
Rating for Element #2	98%
Acceptable rating:	90%
Overall Category Rating:	98%

Summarize Category (or Element) Findings:

For Element 1, there were two deficiencies identified. In both cases under review, the CE did not take appropriate development actions to address outstanding issues in the reopening or remand. After receiving the Industrial Hygienist (IH) reports, the CE did not give the treating physician an opportunity to provide an opinion on causation. Instead, the CE moved directly to a request for an opinion from a Contract Medical Consultant (CMC).

In Element 2, the reviewers found eight errors. Two of the errors involved cases where cover letter or decision language did not accurately provide a summary of the decision outcome. For example, a cover letter summarizing a recommendation to deny, for a RD that was recommending an acceptance for impairment benefits.

In two other cases, the decisions did not include the IH or CMC reports as part of the enclosures. In one case, the Explanation of Findings contained narrative on development steps that belonged in the Statement of the Case. In this case, the

decision erroneously states that the Department of Energy (DOE) verified a period of subcontractor employment.

Reviewers found one RD to be deficient in a case, as it did not contain any narrative describing attempts by the district office to obtain an opinion from the treating physician.

In two cases, errors were found within the Conclusion of Law (COL) section of the RD. In the first case, as mentioned in above, the authorized representative's address was incorrect. In the same case, the summary, as it pertained to new causation evidence, was not accurate in the SOC. In a second case the RD was full of mistakes including an incorrect date of diagnosis, date of marriage, and date of death, all in the Explanation of Findings.

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Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: August 12, 2019 – August 16, 2019

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: June 1, 2018 – May 31, 2019

Standard:	Category #4: Part B Recommended Decisions
	Element #1: Outcome and Written Quality

Number of cases reviewed	49
Rating for Element #1	97%
Acceptable rating:	90%
Overall Category Rating:	97%

Summarize Category (or Element) Findings:

The results of our review revealed that the Seattle District Office is performing well above the acceptable level in Part B Recommended Decisions. Out of the 49 cases reviewed, the review team identified 14 total deficiencies within 10 specific case files. The results of the review noted 3 specific trends.

Specifically, 3 deficiencies were noted in which the cover letter or the recommended decision referred to the incorrect condition. We also identified 3 additional cases in which the cover letter was addressed incorrectly. Finally, we identified 6 additional cases in which the Explanation of Findings (EOF) lacked sufficient discussion regarding programmatic criteria required for the acceptance of a claim.

Summarize Other Significant Findings:

None Identified

AR TEAM REVIEWER(s):	DATE:
Amy Zenobi, Jennifer Blair, Richard Smith, Bernadette DeHerrera, Daniel Divittorio, Michelle Taylor, Sharon Richardson, Melissa Baker, Eileen Horton	August 16, 2019

AR-1

Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: August 12, 2019 – August 16, 2019

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: June 1, 2018 – May 31, 2019

Standard:	Category #5: ECS Coding Element #1: Recommended Decision Coding Element #2: Accepted Medical Condition Coding Element #3: Causation Path Coding
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Number of cases reviewed	52
Rating for Element #1	97%
Rating for Element #2	100%
Rating for Element #3	89%
Acceptable rating:	90%
Overall Category Rating:	96%

Summarize Category (or Element) Findings:

The results of our review revealed that the Seattle District Office is performing at more than an acceptable level in ECS coding. Out of the 52 cases reviewed, the review team identified 10 total deficiencies within 7 specific case files.

With regard to Element 1, there were 3 deficiencies noted. 2 cases were noted as containing an error regarding conflicting employment information within ECS and the written recommended decision. The other deficiency pertained to an incorrect reason code for acceptance within ECS.

Element 2 contained no deficiencies.

For Element 3, 7 deficiencies were identified in 5 case files. 4 cases missed entering a positive Part E based on B causation path in ECS. Another case had only one causation path for 9 separate Part E skin cancers. 2 cases were noted to contain deficiencies regarding the entering the incorrect Evidence Source Path in ECS.

Summarize Other Significant Findings:

None Identified

AR TEAM REVIEWER(S)	DATE
Amy Zenobi, Jennifer Blair, Richard Smith, Bernadette DeHerrera, Daniel Divittorio, Michellé Taylor, Sharon Richardson, Melissa Baker, Eileen Horton	August 16, 2019

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Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: August 12, 2019 – August 16, 2019

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: June 1, 2018 – May 31, 2019

Standard:	Category #6: Consequential Illness Acceptances Element #1: Development Element #2: Consequential Illness Letter/RD – Outcome and Written Quality
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Number of cases reviewed	41
Rating for Element #1	100%
Rating for Element #2	100%
Acceptable rating:	90%
Overall Category Rating:	100%

Summarize Category (or Element) Findings:

There were no deficiencies noted for either element in this category.

Summarize Other Significant Findings:

None Identified

AR TEAM REVIEWER(s):	DATE:
Amy Zenobi, Jennifer Blair, Richard Smith, Bernadette DeHerrera, Daniel Divittorio, Michelle Taylor, Sharon Richardson, Melissa Baker, Eileen Horton	August 16, 2019

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Accountability Review Findings

Dates of Review: August 12, 2019 – August 16, 2019

Office Reviewed: Seattle District Office

Review Period: June 1, 2018 – May 31, 2019

Standard:	Category #7: OIS Indexing
	Element #1: Incoming Correspondence
	Element #2: Outgoing Correspondence

Number of cases reviewed	52
Rating for Element #1	98%
Rating for Element #2	100%
Acceptable rating:	90%
Overall Category Rating:	98%

Summarize Category (or Element) Findings:

A total of four (4) errors in three (3) cases were identified in this category. All of the errors occurred within the incoming correspondence element. Two documents in two different cases reviewed were illegible, with no indication that they were the "best possible" copies of the documents uploaded into OIS. One of the cases had a multiple page document that contained two errors: pages bronzed into OIS out of order and incorrectly indexed. The document should have been indexed under "Forms and Claims" rather than "Other Documents," as it contained Form OWCP-915 for medical expense reimbursement.

No significant trends were identified, and no issues regarding improperly scanned documents were identified.

Summarize Other Significant Findings:

No other significant findings were identified.

AR TEAM REVIEWER(s):	DATE:
Charles Bogino, Curtis Johnson	August 16, 2019