



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**Veterans Benefits Administration**  
**Washington, D.C. 20420**

September 23, 2014

Director (00)  
All VA Regional Offices and Centers

Fast Letter 14-10

ATTN: All Veterans Service Center and Pension Management Center Personnel

SUBJ: Processing Requests For Private Medical Evidence.

**Purpose**

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) has revised the development process for obtaining private medical records in order to replicate the higher response rate experienced by the Social Security Administration (SSA). This fast letter (FL) introduces the new [VA Form \(VAF\) 21-4142, Authorization to Disclose Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](#), and [VAF 21-4142a, General Release for Medical Provider Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](#) and provides new procedures for requesting a claimant's private medical records.

**Background**

The prior version of VAF 21-4142 required the claimant to complete a separate authorization form for each private medical records source, which often greatly increased the claimant's burden to provide medical evidence in support of his or her claim. The form also expired 180 days from the date the claimant signed the form, which often impacted our development timeliness.

The revised VAF 21-4142 is aligned with the format used by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and SSA, while continuing to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

**What's New**

- The claimant will provide only one authorization form, instead of a signed authorization form for each health care provider.
- The general authorization will expire one year from the date the claimant signs it.

Fast Letter 14-10

- The private medical source information (e.g., name and address of medical provider or facility and dates of treatment) will now be captured on VAF 21-4142a, which the claimant will complete in conjunction with a VAF 21-4142. Do not send the VAF 21-4142a to the private provider.

**Procedures**

Implementing the forms

Effective the date of this FL, immediately discontinue sending the outdated VAF 21-4142. However, if the claimant submits an outdated VAF 21-4142, accept the form and request the private treatment records using this form. Do not develop for the new VAFs 21-4142 or 21-4142a when a complete outdated VAF 21-4142 is of record.

The VAF 21-4142a was created to obtain private medical source information from the claimant. This form is for internal VA use only and should not be submitted to the private medical provider. The VAF 21-4142, along with the development letter to private provider (3<sup>rd</sup> party letter), is sufficient to request private medical records. *(See Addendum A for more information on new language added to the development letter to private provider- 3<sup>rd</sup> party letter).*

The claimant must submit VAF 21-4142 to authorize a private care provider’s disclosure of information to VA and VAF 21-4142a to provide private provider information to VA. VAF 21-4142 is available on the intranet/internet with VAF 21-4142a attached, thereby encouraging the claimant to complete both documents before submitting them to VA. VAF 21-4142a is also available separately online to allow the claimant to identify more than three medical providers.

Using the new VAF 21-4142 and VAF 21-4142a

<b><i>If...</i></b>	<b><i>Then...</i></b>
VAF 21-4142 is of record but a VAF 21-4142a is not,	develop for private medical information by telephone and record this private medical source information on <a href="#">VA Form 27-0820, Report of General Information</a> per <a href="#">M27-1, Part I.5.8.c</a> . If you are unable to reach the claimant via phone contact, send a VAF 21-4142a to the claimant for completion. See <a href="#">M21-1MR Part I.1.B.3.f</a> , for more information.  Note: No further action to request the claimant’s private treatment records is required if the claimant fails to send in the forms.
VAF 21-4142a is of record and a VAF 21-4142 is not,	send a notification letter requesting the claimant to return a completed VAF 21-4142.  Note: No further action to request the identified medical records is required if the claimant fails to send in the forms.

Fast Letter 14-10

both VAF 21-4142 and VAF 21-4142a are of record,	develop to the private providers listed on VAF 21-4142a. Provide each provider a copy of VAF 21-4142. Do not provide a copy of VAF 21-4142a.
both VAF 21-4142 and VAF 21-4142a are not of record,	develop to the claimant to complete, sign, date, and return both forms.  Note: If no response is received, no further action to request the claimant's private treatment records is required.

If a private medical source refuses to give VA a copy of a claimant's medical records and requires the claimant to complete a special authorization form (other than VAF 21-4142), follow the guidelines in [M21-1MR Part III.iii.1.C.14.g](#).

The M21-1MR will be updated to include these new procedures.

**Website Information**

VBA established a new website at [www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/consent\\_privateproviders.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/consent_privateproviders.asp) to provide more information to private medical providers about the release of records to VA. The website answers private provider frequently asked questions and includes a letter from HHS confirming that our form is HIPAA compliant. This website is similar to SSA's website that serves the same purpose. This information is included in the development letter to private providers.

**Questions**

Submit questions regarding this FL through your Veterans Service Center Manager or Pension Management Center Manager to [VAVBAWAS/CO/212A](#) or [VAVBAWAS/ CO/PENSION POL & PROC.](#)

/S/

David R. McLenachen, Director  
Pension and Fiduciary Service

/S/

Thomas J. Murphy, Director  
Compensation Service

Enclosure: Addendum A

**Addendum A**

Until the development action items are updated in the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) and Modern Award Processing-Development (MAP-D) for the new VAF 21-4142 and VAF 21-4142a, please use the following workarounds:

Claimant letter in VBMS

<b>Live Compensation Claims</b>		
<b>If ...</b>	<b>Then...</b>	<b>Insert the following language in the 'What We Need' section:</b>
VAF 21-4142 is of record but a VAF 21-4142a is not,	Create custom development action titled 21-4142a.	Please complete and return the enclosed VA Form 21-4142a, <i>General Release for Medical Provider Information</i> , so that we can obtain treatment records from your private medical sources.
VAF 21-4142a is of record and a VAF 21-4142 is not,	Create a custom development action titled 21-4142.	Please complete and return the enclosed VA Form 21-4142, <i>Authorization to Disclose Information</i> , so that we can obtain the authorization to request treatment records from your private medical sources listed on the received VA Form 21-4142a, <i>General Release for Medical Provider Information</i> .
both VAF 21-4142 and VAF 21-4142a are not of record,	Create a custom development action titled 21-4142/21-4142a.	On your application, you indicated that you received treatment from <i>FREE TEXT</i> .  Complete and return the enclosed VA Form 21-4142, <i>Authorization to Disclose Information</i> and VA Form 21-4142a, <i>General Release for Medical Provider Information</i> , so that we can obtain treatment records on your behalf. You may want to obtain and send us the records yourself, if possible.  Please complete both of the attached forms in order for us to assist with obtaining your records.

Note: In all instances where a workaround was used, always update the tracked item suspense for the appropriate days.

Claimant letter in MAP-D

<b>Live Compensation and Pension Claims</b>		
<b>If ...</b>	<b>Then ...</b>	<b>MAP-D...</b>
VAF 21-4142 is of record but a VAF 21-4142a is not,	1. Under the <i>Available Development Actions</i> column select the desired item and carry over into the <i>Selected Development Actions</i> column.	Please complete and return the enclosed VA Form 21-4142a, <i>General Release for Medical Provider Information</i> , so that we can obtain treatment records from your private medical sources.
VAF 21-4142a is of record and a VAF 21-4142 is not,	2. While the development action item is still selected, select <i>View</i> .	Please complete and return the enclosed VA Form 21-4142, <i>Authorization to Disclose Information</i> , so that we can obtain the authorization to request treatment records from your private medical sources listed on the received VA Form 21-4142a, <i>General Release for Medical Provider Information</i> .
both VAF 21-4142 and VAF 21-4142a are not of record,	3. Under <i>Paragraph Text</i> , copy and paste the language in the MAP-D column.	<p>On your application, you indicated that you received treatment from FREE TEXT.</p> <p>Complete and return the enclosed VA Form 21-4142, <i>Authorization to Disclose Information</i> and VA Form 21-4142a, <i>General Release for Medical Provider Information</i>, so that we can obtain treatment records on your behalf. You may want to obtain and send us the records yourself.</p> <p>Please complete both of the attached forms in order for us to assist with obtaining your records.</p>
<b>Survivor Claims</b>		
VAF 21-4142 is of record but a VAF 21-4142a is not,	Use the same steps as above.	Complete and return the enclosed VA Form 21-4142a, <i>General Release for Medical Provider Information</i> , so that we can obtain treatment information. Provide the names and addresses of health care providers who treated the Veteran during the year preceding death. You may wish to contact the providers yourself and ask them to provide the requested records promptly.

Fast Letter 14-10

<p>requesting medical evidence from claimant and both VAF 21-4142 and VAF 21-4142a are not of record,</p>	<p>Use the same steps as above.</p>	<p>We will request medical records from any VA facility that treated the Veteran.</p> <p>If a private physician or facility has treated the Veteran, we may be able to request these records on your behalf. Complete and return the enclosed VA Form 21-4142, <i>Authorization to Disclose Information</i> and VA Form 21-4142a, <i>General Release for Medical Provider Information</i>, so that we can obtain treatment records on your behalf. You may want to obtain and send us the records yourself.</p>
<p>disability onset occurs many years after service and both VAF 21-4142 and VAF 21-4142a are not of record,</p>	<p>Use the same steps as above.</p>	<p>To establish service connection for cause of death, it must be shown that the condition that caused the Veteran's death had its onset in service or was permanently aggravated by the military service. This evidence should include treatment records showing when the Veteran was first treated for this condition either during or after service.</p> <p>If a private physician or facility treated the Veteran, we may be able to request these records on your behalf. Complete and return the enclosed VA Form 21-4142, <i>Authorization to Disclose Information</i> and VA Form 21-4142a, <i>General Release for Medical Provider Information</i>, so that we can obtain treatment records on your behalf. You may want to obtain and send us the records yourself.</p>

Development letter to Private Provider (3rd Party Letter)

When generating a 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Letter in MAP-D, remove the condition from the letter so only the treatment time frame is listed.

Prior to the signature block, add the following sentence:

**For additional information regarding VA Form 21-4142, refer to the following website:**  
[www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/consent\\_privateproviders.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/consent_privateproviders.asp).