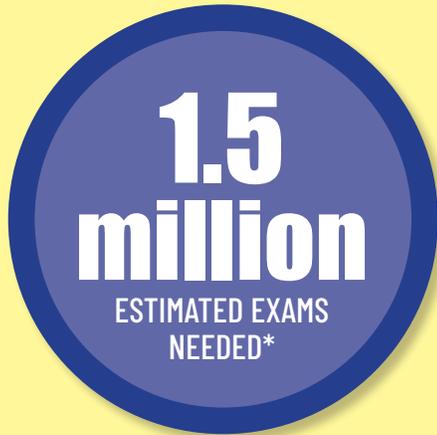


Canceled Disability Benefit Exams During Pandemic



Demand for Exams and Claims Backlog Increased

As of July 31, 2020



For this report, the VA OIG reviewed a sample of 400 claims denied from March 1 to June 16, 2020, with one or more canceled exams.

*Based on number of claimed disabilities.

Percentage of Claims Improperly Denied Due to Canceled Exams Fell



Clarified Guidance
May 14



VBA Actions Regarding Benefit Exams from March through June 2020

MARCH	Conducted refresher training for contractors on telehealth and Acceptable Clinical Evidence exams.
APRIL	Required veterans to request an extension when unable to report for an exam, retroactive to March 1. However, call center guidance did not indicate this requirement and veterans were told claims would not be denied solely based on a missed exam.
MAY	Directed claims processors to not deny claims solely based on a missed exam.
JUNE	Started review of over 20,000 claims denied from March 1 to June 16, 2020, with one or more canceled exams.



VBA needs to ensure its strategy adequately addresses the growing inventory of exams and claims, errors due to exam cancellations, and future pandemic surges.