**Procedural Standard 00-3**

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TO: DES Staff

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 Disability Evaluation Services

RE: Requesting Consultative Examinations (CEs)

Purpose: This instruction assists the Disability Reviewer in determining when and how to obtain a consultative examination.

Policy: Consultative Examinations (CEs) are requested when there is insufficient

clinical information for the Disability Reviewer (DR) to make a decision or there is conflicting information and the reviewer is unable to resolve the discrepancy without further information about the client’s impairment(s). Evidence is sufficient when it is consistent and complete enough to permit an assessment of impairment severity and/or to assess the client’s functioning.

Sufficient information can often be obtained without resorting to a CE. The DR first makes telephone contact (or refers the request to the targeted clinical call desk) with the treating source(s) most likely to provide the clinical information needed to make a decision prior to requesting the CE.

Even if evidence is insufficient to determine if the client’s impairments meet or equal the SSI listings/DTA Medical Standards, the DR considers vocational pre-screening when there is sufficient clinical information to support assessment of functional limitation(s) that the DR anticipates would result in an approval. The vocational pre-screening is also done before the CE is requested.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Note: Do not request a pre-screen for the purpose of determining if information is sufficient for all complaints.

Procedure: Medical and psychological CE providers are provided with detailed guidelines regarding the content requirements of CEs in their specialty in advance of DES scheduling appointments with them.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The following is an overview of the DR’s principle activities involved in requesting medical and psychological CE’s. DR’s refer to the CE Request Guidelines document for detailed instructions regarding CE request data entry, CE cancellations and other technical aspects related to requesting CEs

1. Selecting the appropriate specialty[[3]](#footnote-3) [[4]](#footnote-4)

For multiple medical/surgical impairments, request an internal medicine specialty. For claim(s) in only one body system, select the most appropriate specialty as in the following examples:

* Fractured tibia/fibula-select orthopedic.
* Cataracts/glaucoma-select ophthalmological.
* Reflex sympathetic dystrophy-select neurological.

For mental impairments, determine if a psychological or psychiatric examination is most appropriate and what, if any, testing is needed.[[5]](#footnote-5)

1. Special Instructions to the CE Provider (Documenting the “MD Notes” function in DEScovery)

Enter all relevant impairments/diagnoses/claims.

When DES is relying on the CE provider to complete the testing only if indicated by the examination, instruct them to do the relevant testing “….only as indicated by positive exam findings.”

If there is something in the current or prior episodes that in the DR’s clinical judgment would be important and/or useful to the CE provider, that information is entered in “MD notes.”

1. Ordering Required Tests (DEScovery ‘Select Authorized Test’ function)

Select the correct CPT code from the “Select Authorized Test” drop-down.

Note: Always consult your Supervisor before requesting an unauthorized test.

Summary:

Consultative examinations are required when the reviewer is unable to make a decision with the available information. An appropriate CE provider and testing should be requested according to the client’s impairment(s).

1. See “Best Practices for Pre-Screens” (Training Power Point) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See “Physical Exam Guidelines for Medical CE Providers” and “Psychological Exam Guidelines for CE Providers.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See “CE Request Guidelines” for more detail. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For DTA originated cases, if both medical and psychological CE’s are needed, first request the type of CE associated with the client’s primary claim of disability. Request both CE’s simultaneously if the primary claim cannot be ascertained. If the first CE does not result in approval, obtain the second CE. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See PS 99-5 ” Consultative examinations by psychiatrists andpsychologists” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)