



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
UNITED STATES ARMY PHYSICAL DISABILITY AGENCY  
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AHRC-DOE

21 August 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR Presidents, U.S. Army Physical Evaluation Boards

SUBJECT: Ankylosing Spondylitis

1. When the MEB evidence supports the Soldier's Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) fulfills the VASRD requirements for rating with reference to "as an active process", and when this provides the higher rating (vs. "for unfitting chronic residuals"), the PEB must rate the Soldier's AS with reference to VASRD 5002 using the "as an active process" scheme. The PEB will use the evidence within the MEB case file to determine whether the Soldier's AS fulfills the VASRD requirements for rating "as an active process," i.e., the MEB examiner must address whether the Soldier has any constitutional signs and whether the AS is active. The MEB examiner must also describe the extent of overall impairment of health. See VA Joints worksheet. 20 APR 2009. <https://www.hrc.army.mil/SITE/ACTIVE/tagd/Pda/pdapage.htm>. For all PEB adjudications involving unfitting AS, the PEB must indicate on the DA Form 199 that it considered assigning a rating under both rating schemes, and used the rating scheme that provided the higher evaluation, or indicate why the "as an active process" scheme was not applicable.

2. When the PEB finds the Soldier unfit due to AS which affects a body system other than the musculoskeletal system, and rates this condition, the PEB may not use symptoms from these (already rated) conditions to support another rating under the "as an active process" rating scheme. For example, if the Soldier has disability due to a separately ratable eye and separately ratable heart condition, IAW VASRD 4.14, avoidance of pyramiding, the PEB must avoid using symptomatology from these already rated conditions to support a rating based on "definite impairment of health objectively supported by examination finding" or that cause "incapacitating exacerbations occurring 3 or more times a year."

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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DANIEL L. CASSIDY  
COL, IN  
Deputy Commander