(Effective as to outpatient treatment March 10, 1976.)

A reduction in the total rating will not be subject to §3.105(e) of this chapter. The total rating will be followed by an open rating reflecting the appropriate schedular evaluation; where the evidence is inadequate to assign the schedular evaluation, a physical examination will be scheduled prior to the end of the total rating period.

(b) A total rating under this section will require full justification on the rating sheet and may be extended as follows:

(1) Extensions of 1, 2 or 3 months beyond the initial 3 months may be made under paragraph (a) (1), (2) or (3) of this section.

(2) Extensions of 1 or more months up to 6 months beyond the initial 6 months period may be made under paragraph (a) (2) or (3) of this section upon approval of the Veterans Service Center Manager.

§ 4.31 Zero percent evaluations.

In every instance where the schedule does not provide a zero percent evaluation for a diagnostic code, a zero percent evaluation shall be assigned when the requirements for a compensable evaluation are not met.

§ 4.32 Functional loss.

Disability of the musculoskeletal system is primarily the inability, due to damage or infection in parts of the body with normal excursion, strength, speed, coordination and endurance. It is essential that the examination on which ratings are based adequately portray the anatomical damage, and the functional loss, with respect to all these elements. The functional loss may be due to absence of part, or all, of the necessary bones, joints and muscles, or associated structures, or to deformity, adhesions, de-