

Section 301.75–15 issued under Sec. 204, Title II, Public Law 106–113, 113 Stat. 1501A–293; sections 301.75–15 and 301.75–16 issued under Sec. 203, Title II, Public Law 106–224, 114 Stat. 400 (7 U.S.C. 1421 note).

Done in Washington, DC, this 30th day of October 2017.

Michael C. Gregoire,
Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 2017–23897 Filed 11–1–17; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Rural Utilities Service

7 CFR Part 4279

Guaranteed Loanmaking

CFR Correction

In Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2000 to End, revised as of January 1, 2017, on page 749, § 4279.162 is added to read as follows:

§ 4279.162 Strategic economic and community development.

Applicants with projects that support the implementation of strategic economic development and community development plans are encouraged to review and consider 7 CFR part 1980, subpart K, which contains provisions for providing priority to projects that support the implementation of strategic economic development and community development plans on a Multi-jurisdictional basis.

[81 FR 10457, Mar. 1, 2016]

[FR Doc. 2017–23912 Filed 11–1–17; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

38 CFR Part 4

RIN 2900–AO44

Schedule for Rating Disabilities; The Endocrine System

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This document amends the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) by revising the portion of the Schedule that addresses endocrine conditions and disorders of the endocrine system. The effect of this action is to ensure that the VASRD uses current medical terminology and to

provide detailed and updated criteria for evaluation of endocrine disorders.

DATES: This rule is effective on December 10, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ioulia Vvedenskaya, Medical Officer, Part 4 VASRD Regulations Staff (211C), Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20420, *Ioulia.Vvedenskaya@va.gov*, (202) 461–9700 (this is not a toll-free telephone number).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: VA published a proposed rule in the **Federal Register** at 80 FR 39011 on July 8, 2015, to amend the portion of the VASRD dealing with endocrine disorders. VA provided a 60-day public comment period, and interested persons were invited to submit written comments, suggestions, or objections on or before September 8, 2015. VA received comments from four individuals. In addition, VA received a comment from a veterans service organization. Unless otherwise indicated below, VA adopts the changes set forth in the proposed rule.

Public Comments

One commenter asked whether VA would recognize polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) under the VA rating schedule. VA has a mechanism in place to address PCOS under 38 CFR 4.116. Specifically, the rating schedule for Gynecological Conditions and Disorders of the Breast addresses various ovarian conditions under Diagnostic Code (DC) 7615, “Ovary, disease, injury, or adhesions of” and allows VA to rate based on whether symptoms are controlled by or require continuous treatment. In exceptional cases where the schedular evaluation is inadequate, 38 CFR 3.321 allows for extraschedular evaluation. Therefore, VA makes no changes based on this comment.

Two commenters proposed additional modifications to DC 7913, “Diabetes mellitus.” One commenter suggested adding a note to address the issue of regulation of activities. Another commenter suggested not changing the insulin requirements within DC 7913 without considering the other requirements in the DC such as regulation of activities. The same commenter suggested removing the insulin requirement for a 20-percent rating and the regulation of activities requirement at all disability ratings under the DC. The commenter stated that the functional impairment caused by required use of insulin is greater than impairment caused by ingestion of oral

medication to control diabetes. As stated in the proposed rule, VA is not proposing any change to the evaluation criteria for DC 7913 at this time other than requiring “one or more daily injection” of insulin for a 20-, 40- or 60-percent rating and instead intends to establish a work group to specifically address this condition. Therefore, these comments are beyond the scope of this rulemaking. However, VA will take these comments into consideration in connection with a possible future rulemaking.

One commenter suggested changing the terminology for a 100-percent rating under DC 7903, “Hypothyroidism” from “myxedema” to “myxedema coma or crisis” because myxedema can be present without causing the requisite level of symptoms for a 100-percent rating. Myxedema is a term used to denote severe hypothyroidism, and myxedema coma or myxedema crisis is a medical emergency and represents a specific rare life-threatening clinical condition. Because the clinical picture of myxedema appears in the most extreme cases of hypothyroidism, we believe that this manifestation of the disability warrants a 100-percent rating (See Greenspan’s Basic & Clinical Endocrinology (D.G. Gardner et al. eds., 9th ed. 2011) available at <http://accessmedicine.mhmedical.com/content.aspx?bookid=380§ionid=39744047#8401831>). Therefore, VA makes no changes based on this comment.

The same commenter proposed that VA retain a 10-percent minimum evaluation in the DCs for endocrine disabilities because of the need for continuous medication to control the symptoms of these disabilities. VA disagrees. In the absence of symptoms, medical management of chronic endocrine disorders does not present a significant lifestyle adjustment, and it does not result in impairment of earning capacity (see 38 U.S.C. 1155). Therefore, VA makes no changes based on this comment.

The same commenter noted a typographical error in the text of proposed DC 7911. The word “adrenocortical” was misspelled as “adrenalcortical.” VA has changed the spelling of the term based on this comment.

One commenter was supportive of the overall changes and additions to this section of the VASRD, such as additional DCs, clarification of notes on residuals affecting other body systems, instructions to rate some residuals separately, accounting for additional symptoms, and formation of a new work group for diabetes mellitus. The