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INFORMATION PAPER

MCJA-OSC
13 January 2015

SUBJECT: Diabetes Mellitus

1. Purpose: To provide general information for Soldiers who have been diagnosed with Diabetes Mellitus and are undergoing processing in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES).

2. Facts:

a. Diabetes Mellitus (DM) is a condition manifested by elevated blood sugar. It may lead to a Soldier being found unfit for medical retention. DM may result in complications including eye disease, coronary artery disease, peripheral vascular disease, cerebrovascular disease, gastrointestinal conditions, sexual dysfunction, infections, dental and lower extremity disorders.

b. When evaluating a Soldier diagnosed with DM, the Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) will consider, among other things, the Soldier's HbA1c (hemoglobin) level. The Soldier's HbA1c level reflects the Soldier's average blood sugar levels over a two to three month period. An HbA1c level of 7.0% or lower is often considered favorably by the PEB in a Soldier's quest to remain in service.

c. Soldiers diagnosed with DM may be found fit for duty. However, the extent of medical treatment required to control the Soldier's DM and the presence of diabetic complications may lead the PEB to conclude that the diabetic Soldier is unfit for continued military service. The PEB's decision is performance-based and highly fact-specific. The PEB will consider each case separately and the outcome will vary significantly from case to case. Relevant factors the PEB will consider include:

(1) The Soldier's knowledge and understanding of the disease and how to manage it while in uniform (e.g., what to avoid in MREs);

(2) The degree to which the disease is consistently under control (typically shown by the Soldier's HbA1c level);

(3) The Soldier's compliance with prescribed therapy, diet, and medical care;
and,

(4) The specific activity and diet restrictions for this particular Soldier.

d. The PEB will balance these factors against the demands of the Soldier's Primary Military Occupational Specialty (PMOS) and Grade.

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e. A Soldier diagnosed with DM who desires to be found fit for continued military service may consider seeking the following types of evidence in advance of the PEB review:

(1) A letter from the physician currently treating the Soldier's DM explaining that DM does not prevent the Soldier's performance of relevant activities. The letter should also describe the medical plan for controlling the condition and indicate whether the Soldier is compliant with the plan;

(2) Statements from the Soldier's chain of command, military supervisors, and persons knowledgeable about the Soldier's duties that address his or her ability to perform those activities;

(3) A current DA Form 3349, Physical Profile, with as few restrictions as possible;

(4) An APFT scorecard showing the Soldier has taken and passed a recent APFT with at least one aerobic event and other evidence of physical fitness (e.g., extra-curricular athletic events);

(5) A list of current medications prescribed and taken for the condition.

f. If the PEB finds a Soldier to be unfit for duty based on DM and the disease is determined to be service connected, the VA will adjudicate the appropriate disability rating for DM using the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD). The most relevant factors for DM in the VASRD include:

(1) Whether or not the condition is managed by a restricted diet only;

(2) If the Soldier requires a restricted diet, insulin, and/or an oral hypoglycemic agent to control the DM;

(3) Whether the Soldier's activities must be regulated; and

(4) The degree of any complications.

4. This Information Paper is provided as a service to Soldiers in the MEB/PEB process and is intended as general information only. A Soldiers' Counsel is available to provide specific legal advice to Soldiers involved in the MEB/PEB process. Contact your local Office of Soldiers' Counsel for more information. If you don't know how to reach your local OSC office please contact you PEBLO or see our website for contact information at <https://www.jagcnet.army.mil/otjagosc> .

Approved by: Ms. Joyce A. Hamel

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