

WHERE VA NEXUS OPINIONS COME FROM



FOUR SOURCES

Source label matters less than competence, facts, and reasoning.

VA may receive medical opinions from its own examiners, VHA treating providers, private treating clinicians, and independent examiners. No category automatically wins.

1. VA C&P EXAMINER

ORDERED FOR THE CLAIM

Examines the veteran, reviews assigned records, answers VA's requested questions, and may complete a DBQ.

- No direct cost to the veteran
- Scope set by VA's request
- Can be challenged for inadequate reasoning or wrong facts

VA CLAIM EVIDENCE

2. VHA TREATING PROVIDER

KNOWS THE TREATMENT HISTORY

May document medical judgments, diagnoses, treatment effects, and relevant history within professional and facility limits.

- Longitudinal familiarity may help
- May decline formal nexus work
- Specialty must fit the question

TREATMENT SOURCE

3. PRIVATE TREATING CLINICIAN

EXISTING CARE RELATIONSHIP

Can review the claim question using knowledge of the veteran and a focused evidence packet.

- May know chronology well
- Office fees and policies vary
- Must address service evidence, not treatment alone

PRIVATE EVIDENCE

4. INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

FOCUSED RECORD REVIEW

An IME or IMO provider may evaluate a specific disputed question, often after a negative C&P opinion.

- Relevant expertise can be valuable
- Costs vary widely
- Paid status does not invalidate or guarantee weight

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

WHAT VA SHOULD WEIGH

BEYOND THE SOURCE LABEL

01

COMPETENCE

Is the provider qualified to address this medical question?

02

ACCURATE FACTS

Does the opinion use the correct history and evidence?

03

REASONING

Is the medical logic visible and individualized?

04

SCOPE

Does it answer the correct theory and direction?

05

COMPLETENESS

Does it address material contrary evidence?

NOT A REFERRAL

RateMyVSO explains source categories and evidence quality. It does not endorse or refer users to a particular nexus-letter company.

NO SOURCE AUTOMATICALLY WINS. A familiar provider can write a weak opinion. A paid independent examiner can write a strong or weak one. VA must evaluate the substance.

