

Important New Patient Reminders

If you proceed with the IME with Dr. Bash, please review the following important reminders:

1. Dr. Bash is a paralyzed veteran; he types each medical evaluation with two fingers. As you can imagine, the workload sometimes is difficult, yet he is unrelenting in helping veterans obtain benefits that rightfully belong to them. He also has a clinical practice, a demanding itinerary as a speaker at medical meetings with his peers, a teaching position, and a family. Each of these demands his time and attention as well.
2. Veterans are fortunate to find a physician who will take time to evaluate their medical file and try to help with their claims. Every month, the “hits” on the VMA Web site suggest that more veterans are finding Dr. Bash. At times, he may need to stop taking new patients for a while. The good news is, this e-mail means your information has already been sent to him. (If you refer others to Dr. Bash, they might have to wait.)
3. Dr. Bash reports a high success rate in helping veterans with disability claims because he reviews the *full* medical record as provided by the veteran, but the final claims decision always lies with the VA (or other) disability rating specialists.
4. Occasionally, Dr. Bash will need to write an additional letter if the VA denies the case at the regional, DRO, or BVA level, or if the VA gets its own IME. If the VA uses two or more physician opinions against your case, Dr. Bash has access to other physicians who can evaluate cases and may be able to help. If this happens, contact Dr. Bash as soon as possible; he will be glad to help you decide your next best step.
5. Working a disability claim can be a long process, much akin to a four-quarter ball game or nine-inning baseball contest, with each team having its turn at possessing the ball. So **please be patient**. If you start out expecting a long wait for the decision about your case, you will not become frustrated or disappointed early on.
6. Remember, years of medical records may be familiar to the veteran, but Dr. Bash has never seen them before. Each patient has a unique need, and every page and image must be reviewed. In addition, many cases require his going to the National Institutes of Health for research. **Please be patient**. Your file is one of many on his desk.
7. Dr. Bash often provides his home phone number for his patients. If you need to contact him at home, **please call before 7 p.m. (EST)**.
8. Dr. Bash is often away from his home phone because he is at the library or teaching; you will need to keep trying until you reach him.

9. You must let Dr. Bash know if your case needs to be rushed because of VA hearing schedules, particular needs in the claims process, or clinical urgency (seriously ill or dying patients). **Please watch your deadlines, as the VA will deny and close your claim based on unmet deadlines.** As the deadline approaches, feel free to fax short reminders to Dr. Bash at **301-365-2589**.
Patients must notify Dr. Bash (in writing) of any VA deadlines and specific evidence needed, as no refund will be issued to any patient who fails to tell him exact dates and case-specific needs.
10. Highlighted words—or even arrows, stars, or other “attention getters”—and *simple* notes to mark important facts would be helpful for reviewing your file.
11. Unless, Dr. Bash requests that you do so, please do not send any single pieces of information for your medical file. Dr. Bash does not have a file person or system. Please gather everything and send at one time so he can have your case as one self-contained record. The more organized you make your file, the faster and more efficient he can be with your IME. Remember, **ALWAYS include your address and phone number on all correspondence.** Also, include your time zone and the best time to call, as Dr. Bash often calls outside normal business hours. He begins his day at 3–4 a.m.
12. A fee—determined case by case—is charged for an independent medical evaluation, but it is important to consider that the financial and/or ancillary benefits can far outweigh the fee. And without question, the veteran’s peace of mind is incalculable.
13. Dr. Bash’s goal is to complete all IMEs within four weeks after full payment is received. While Dr. Bash will consider arrangements for partial payment from veterans who cannot prepay in full, please realize that those who pay in full should and will go first.
14. If payment is by personal check, allow up to 10 days for the check to clear before Dr. Bash begins the evaluation. (Patients should check their own account to see when the check is paid.)
15. When mailing your medical file, use FedEx, UPS, USPS certified mail, or other service with mail tracking and return receipt so that you know when Dr. Bash receives it. To preserve time for medical reviews, Dr. Bash is unable to stop and notify each patient that he has received the records or that the check has cleared.
16. The best way to leave a short message for Dr. Bash is by fax; each morning, he looks first for incoming faxed documents. Dr. Bash does not mind *friendly* reminders or questions.
17. Dr. Bash is in a wheelchair, so he picks up mail every two–three days. Unless he directs you to do so, mailing overnight is expensive and not usually helpful.
18. During June, July, and August, Dr. Bash works from his office in California, so his mail must be forwarded there. This can add a few days to the timeline.

Note: While he is in California, all of his phone and e-mail contacts remain valid.

19. If, after four weeks, you have not received your IME from Dr. Bash, and you want to know its status, please contact Dr. Bash at drbash@doctor.com or his assistant, Theresa Pierce at pierce.theresa@gmail.com.
20. **Do not send your original medical records**, as Dr. Bash is unable to store or return any documents. On completion of each IME, a reputable shredding company will destroy all paper documents—both medical records and supplemental documents.
21. Please contact Dr. Bash to let him know the outcome of your case. This is important feedback that will allow Dr. Bash to accurately report to future disabled veterans about the value of his medical evaluations.
22. If you proceed with an IME from Dr. Bash, please review this list at least once more during the four weeks of the IME process.