



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security Fast-Track Disability Processes Get Even Faster

New Rules Will Further Speed Benefits to Tens of Thousands of Americans with Disabilities

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, today announced that the agency has published final rules that will further reduce the time it takes to decide applications for disability benefits from those persons with the most severe disabilities—a process that currently takes less than two weeks on average. The new rules allow disability examiners to make fully favorable determinations for adult cases under the agency's Quick Disability Determination (QDD) and Compassionate Allowance (CAL) processes without medical or psychological consultant approval. It also will help the agency process cases more efficiently as it will give medical and psychological consultants more time to work on complex cases where their expertise is most needed.

“The new rules we are publishing today will help us get disability benefits to the most severely disabled Americans even faster,” Commissioner Astrue said. “This year, more than 100,000 people benefited from our fast-track disability processes and received decisions in a matter of days rather than the months and years it can sometimes take. I am pleased that our fast-track processes will now be even faster and help speed much needed benefits to our most vulnerable citizens.”

Under Social Security's QDD process, a predictive computer model analyzes specific data within the electronic disability file to identify cases where there is a high likelihood that the claimant is disabled and we can quickly obtain medical evidence. The CAL process currently identifies 88 specific diseases and conditions that clearly qualify for Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability benefits and can be fast-tracked.

The final rules, 20 CFR Parts 404 and 416, can be accessed through the *Federal Register* online at www.regulations.gov. They will be effective on November 12, 2010.

Additional information about Social Security's Compassionate Allowances process is available at www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances.

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