



# News Release

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### **Social Security Updates Digestive Listings**

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, today announced that the Social Security Administration published new rules that update its medical listings for people filing for disability benefits based on digestive disorders, including diseases of the liver, stomach and colon. Social Security's medical listings are one of the key elements used in determining whether or not someone qualifies for disability benefits. The new rules are a key step in the Commissioner's initiative to update and improve the medical listings used to evaluate people with disabilities. For the first time, the agency will use a composite of quantitative measures to ensure that people with severe liver disease receive benefits far more quickly than in the past.

"Social Security's disability examiners are working with digestive listings that do not accurately reflect advances in the diagnosis and treatment of digestive disorders," Commissioner Astrue said. "As a result many cases that should be resolved quickly are not being determined appropriately. The changes to our digestive listings are among the many steps we are taking in our effort to bring about accurate allowances for people who apply for Social Security disability."

The changes to the digestive listings reflect state of the art advances in medical knowledge, treatment, and methods of evaluating digestive disorders and Social Security's own program experience. In addition, Social Security has developed a new disability calculator tool that will be used for the evaluation of chronic liver disease in adults and children. This tool is the first of its kind used by the agency to help evaluate whether or not someone qualifies for disability.

"By improving our listings and predictors for digestive disorders, we can more appropriately identify those individuals who should qualify for disability benefits," Commissioner Astrue noted. "Making these types of updates is one of the ways we can improve our service to the American people."

While the agency is expanding its listings to include more digestive impairments, it is also removing some prior listings that no longer appropriately identify individuals who are disabled -- for example, the listing for peptic ulcer disease, which is rarely disabling. To learn more about the effects of various digestive disorders, please visit [www.health.nih.gov/search.asp/5](http://www.health.nih.gov/search.asp/5). To learn more about Social Security's disability program visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/disability](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability).

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