



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security Holds First Disability Hearing on Compassionate Allowances

Experts' Testimony on Evaluating Rare Diseases Available on www.socialsecurity.gov

The Social Security Administration is making statements from its two-day public hearing with some of the nation's leading experts on rare diseases available online at www.socialsecurity.gov. The experts presented testimony and shared their views about Social Security's efforts to identify and implement "compassionate allowances" for children and adults with rare diseases.

"We need to identify and fast-track disability cases that are certain or near-certain to be allowed," said Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security. "The compassionate allowances initiative will allow the Social Security Administration to make decisions on cases involving certain categories of conditions in days or weeks instead of months or years."

Compassionate allowances are a way of quickly identifying diseases and other medical conditions that invariably qualify under Social Security's Listing of Impairments based on minimal objective medical information. Compassionate allowances will let Social Security quickly target the most obviously disabled individuals for allowances based on objective medical information that can be obtained quickly. Many of these claims can be allowed based on confirmation of the diagnosis alone; for example, acute leukemia, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and pancreatic cancer. In these cases, allowances can be made as soon as the diagnosis is confirmed or the other necessary objective medical evidence is obtained.

This hearing, held on December 4th and 5th in Washington, D.C., is the first of four public hearings that Social Security plans to hold over the next year.

Please go to www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances for testimony from many of the rare disease experts and a photo gallery of the hearing.

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