



# News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

## **Social Security Expands Fast-Track Disability Processes**

### **More than 100,000 Disabled Applicants Get Quick Decisions**

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, announced today that improvements to the agency's computer modeling system have increased the number of claimants receiving expedited approvals for disability benefits. Social Security's two-track system -- the Quick Disability Determination (QDD) process and Compassionate Allowances -- is now fast-tracking about 4 percent of all disability cases, a sharp increase from the 2.7 percent of cases fast-tracked last year.

"In practical terms, this means that this year 100,000 to 125,000 disabled Americans -- those with the most severe disabilities -- will be approved for benefits in about 10 days instead of waiting the three to four months it typically takes for an initial decision," Commissioner Astrue said. "These initiatives are truly a lifeline for those who need it most."

Under QDD, a predictive computer model analyzes specific data within the electronic file to identify cases where there is a high potential that the claimant is disabled and where Social Security can quickly obtain evidence of the person's allegations. Through Compassionate Allowances, Social Security expedites the processing of disability claims for applicants with medical conditions so severe that their conditions by definition meet Social Security's standards. These fast-track systems increase the efficiency of the disability process and also help free up resources so the agency can better cope with an increase of about 250,000 cases resulting from the current economic downturn.

"During these tough economic times, getting Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability benefits quickly to Americans who are unable to work helps them and strengthens our economy. For SSI recipients, expedited approvals also ensure they immediately get the vital medical coverage they need," Commissioner Astrue said. "It is critical that we continue to embrace innovative technologies in order to improve the services we provide to the public."

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