



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security Holds Disability Hearing on Compassionate Allowances and Schizophrenia

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, today hosted the agency's fifth public hearing on Compassionate Allowances. Commissioner Astrue was joined by Philip Wang, M.D., Dr. P.H., National Institute of Mental Health, National Institutes of Health, and Social Security executives. They heard testimony from some of the nation's leading experts on schizophrenia about possible methods of identifying and implementing Compassionate Allowances for young adults with schizophrenia.

"Schizophrenia is a devastating disease that affects more than two million Americans, primarily individuals in their teens and twenties," said Commissioner Astrue. "The onset of schizophrenia has life-changing consequences, which can include unemployment and homelessness. This hearing will help us to potentially identify the most severe cases and consider bringing them under our Compassionate Allowances umbrella."

In October 2008, Social Security launched Compassionate Allowances to expedite the processing of disability claims for applicants with medical conditions so severe that their conditions by definition meet Social Security's standards. To learn more and to view a web cast of today's hearing, go to www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances.

"Our Compassionate Allowances and Quick Disability Determination processes are making a real difference by ensuring that Americans with devastating disabilities quickly receive the benefits they need," Commissioner Astrue said. "This fiscal year, we expect to fast-track about 150,000 cases and we plan to add more diseases and impairments to these expedited processes in the coming months."

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