



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Commissioner Astrue Proposes to Extend Social Security's Quick Disability Determination Process to all States

Proposed Rule Would Accelerate Benefits to Those Deemed Clearly Disabled

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, today announced that Social Security will publish a proposed regulation to extend the quick disability determination (QDD) process to all State disability determination services. The process is now operating in the Boston region, comprised of the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. Under QDD, a predictive model analyzes specific elements of data within the electronic claims file to identify claims where there is a high potential that the claimant is disabled and where evidence of the claimant's allegations can be quickly and easily obtained.

"At my confirmation hearing, I promised to look closely at the disability changes we were testing in New England and implement nationally those things that were working well," Commissioner Astrue said. "We have seen the success of the QDD model in identifying cases that are most likely to be allowed. To date, 97 percent of the cases identified have been decided within 21 days and the average decision time is 11 days. We plan to build on the success of QDD by expanding it to all States because it is both efficient and compassionate for us to do so."

Social Security currently receives more than 2.5 million new disability cases each year. In the Boston region, QDD cases constituted slightly less than 3 percent of all new cases because the model does not yet cull a wide enough variety of diseases. Commissioner Astrue has committed to expanding the number of cases that can be decided through the model as high as possible while maintaining accuracy.

"The length of time many people wait for a disability decision is unacceptable," Astrue said. "I am committed to a process that is as fair and speedy as possible. While there is no single magic bullet, with better systems, better business processes and better ways of fast-tracking targeted cases, we can greatly improve the service we provide this vulnerable population."

The proposed regulation provides for a 30 day comment period. It is on display at the Federal Register today and, starting tomorrow, can be read online at www.regulations.gov. For more information about Social Security's disability programs, go to www.socialsecurity.gov.

###