

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

August 2010



Objective

To assess the Social Security Administration's efforts to expedite disability decisions under its Compassionate Allowance (CAL) initiative.

Background

In October 2008, SSA implemented the CAL initiative to expedite the processing of disability claims for applicants whose medical conditions are so severe that their conditions clearly meet SSA's definition of disability. The initiative allows SSA to electronically target and make speedy decisions for the most obviously disabled individuals.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO/BEPDF/A-01-10-21080.pdf>

Compassionate Allowance Initiative (A-01-10-21080)

Our Findings

Generally, we found SSA's efforts to expedite disability decisions under its CAL initiative were successful. SSA processed cases identified as CAL in an average of 47 days—faster than the national average of 101 days in Fiscal Year 2009. However, many of these claims would have been expedited even if not selected under CAL, since they were also selected under other expedited procedures. Also, the Agency did not identify all cases that qualified for CAL processing.

Our Recommendations

We recommend that SSA

1. Continue the best practice of reviewing the CAL Predictive Model periodically and identify enhancements, such as a medical spell check program, to ensure it is working at its optimal level.
2. Assess whether policies and procedures for adjudicating all claims identified for expedited processing should be combined and simplified for the claims adjudication process.

SSA agreed with the recommendations.