

Status of Compassionate Allowance and Quick Disability Determination Expedited Cases

A-01-16-50051



March 2016

Office of Audit Report Summary

Background

We conducted this review to assess the status, 5 years later, of claimants processed through two expedited case initiatives. In our prior reviews of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Compassionate Allowance (CAL) and Quick Disability Determination (QDD) initiatives, we sampled 850 disability cases. We found that SSA had expedited these cases, medically allowed 793, and denied 57.

Once an individual receives disability benefits, SSA conducts a continuing disability review (CDR) to ensure only those who remain disabled receive benefits.

Besides CDRs, SSA performs periodic redeterminations to verify that Title XVI recipients continue to meet specific non-medical eligibility criteria.

For this report, we revisited these 850 cases (sampled from 41,524 CAL and 40,432 QDD cases) and used SSA's systems to obtain payment status, CDR information, overpayment information, work activity, and other relevant data as of June 2015.

Summary

Although 25 percent of allowed claimants in our sample died within 3 months of submitting their application, SSA's CAL and QDD initiatives enabled the Agency to identify and expedite benefits to these disabled claimants before their death.

Based on our review, we estimated that SSA medically allowed about 76,000 and denied about 6,000 cases. As of June 2015, we estimated that, of the cases selected for CAL and QDD processing, about

- 54,000 claimants were deceased;
- 15,000 claimants allowed benefits were alive, were in current pay status, and had received approximately \$214.1 million in benefits per year;
- 7,000 claimants allowed benefits were alive but did not meet Title XVI non-medical eligibility criteria. SSA stopped their Title XVI payments of approximately \$34 million per year;
- 3,000 claimants allowed had benefits ceased because of medical improvement, stopping payments of approximately \$46.1 million per year; and
- 3,000 claimants denied benefits, appealed or reapplied, and were subsequently approved.

In addition, we estimated that, for about 13,000 claimants previously allowed benefits, SSA assessed approximately \$43.9 million in overpayments and recovered approximately \$15.9 million. Finally, we estimated that SSA reviewed approximately 22,000 allowance cases by conducting a CDR or redetermination and generally evaluated earnings for disabled individuals whose record contained work activity or income.