



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security Holds Compassionate Allowances Hearing on Cardiovascular Disease and Multiple Organ Transplants

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, today hosted at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, the agency's sixth public hearing on Compassionate Allowances. Commissioner Astrue joined Susan B. Shurin, Acting Director of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health, and other Social Security officials in listening to testimony from some of the leading experts on cardiovascular disease and multiple organ transplants regarding possible methods of identifying and implementing Compassionate Allowances for both adults and children.

"Compassionate Allowances and the Quick Disability Determination process are making a real difference for disabled Americans by ensuring those with devastating disabilities receive their benefit decisions quickly and accurately," Commissioner Astrue said. "This fiscal year, about 150,000 people will benefit from these fast-track disability processes. With this hearing, we continue to look at broader categories of conditions to determine if a subset or certain diagnosis might clearly meet our disability standards and qualify as a Compassionate Allowance."

Social Security implemented Compassionate Allowances in October 2008 to expedite the processing of disability claims for applicants with medical conditions so severe that their conditions by definition meet Social Security's standards. There currently are 88 specific diseases and conditions that qualify as a Compassionate Allowance. To learn more and to view a web cast of today's hearing, go to www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances.

"Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in America," said Commissioner Astrue. "More than 95,000 people are currently waiting for an organ transplant and nearly 4,000 are added to the waiting list each month. Today's hearing will help us move one step closer to ensuring quick and accurate disability decisions for those with the most severe conditions."

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