



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security to Test Use of Microsoft's *HealthVault* in Disability Process

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, announced today that the agency has entered into an agreement with Microsoft to test the use of Microsoft's *HealthVault* application in the disability process. *HealthVault* is a free online service that enables people to gather, store and manage their families' health information, and share that information with their physicians and healthcare providers. These "personal health records" contain the same types of information that Social Security generally obtains from people applying for disability benefits.

"The use of personal health records holds great promise for ensuring that the medical information we collect from someone applying for disability benefits is accurate and complete," Commissioner Astrue said. "Combined with other advancements in health information technology, our use of *HealthVault* should result in faster decisions for disability applicants. I look forward to working closely with Microsoft, a world-wide leader in information technology."

Social Security and Microsoft are developing a technical prototype connecting the two organizations that will be available later this year. The agency also will collaborate with Microsoft to study current personal health record standards, gaps in those standards, and options for filling those gaps.

Social Security is a recognized leader in the use of health information technology. It is the first government agency to use the Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN), a safe and secure method for receiving instantaneous access to electronic medical records. The NHIN is an initiative of the Department of Health and Human Services and is supported by multiple government agencies and private sector entities.

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