

The Disability Insider

News from the Genex Social
Security Disability Division

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SSA to Eliminate Single Decisionmaker and Prototype Test

On December 12, 2018, the Social Security Administration announced the end of the "single decisionmaker" test effective December 28, 2018. In the single decisionmaker test, a disability examiner was able to make the initial disability determination in most cases without obtaining the signature of a medical or psychological consultant. Under section 832 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, SSA is required to end the single decisionmaker test. SSA also announced they will begin phasing out prototype test states, beginning January 2019 and ending June 26, 2020. There are currently 10 prototype states, for which the reconsideration level of the appeal process has been eliminated. This change will reinstate the reconsideration level in these states. Beginning in January, New Hampshire, New York, Louisiana, Colorado, and California will now have a reconsideration level as the first step of the appeals process. By June of 2020, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Michigan, Missouri, and Alaska will all have the reconsideration level restored.

[Further information can be found here.](#)



2019 Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Rates & Limits

The new 2019 Old Age, Survivor, and Disability Insurance rates and limits effective January 2019 are as follows:

Substantial Gainful Activity

Non-Blind	\$1,220
Blind	\$2,040

Trial Work Period Month \$880

Maximum Taxable Earnings

Social Security	\$132,900
Medicare	No limit

Earnings Required for Work Credits

One Work Credit \$1,360
(One Quarter of Coverage)

Maximum of Four Credits a Year \$5,440

Maximum Social Security Benefits \$2,861

Maximum SSI Benefit

Individual	\$771
Couple	\$1,157

[Further information can be found here.](#)

SSA Proposes Rule Changes on Video Hearings

On November 15, 2018, the Social Security Administration published a proposed rule change to the way claimants attend hearings. Under current guidelines claimants can opt out of a proposed Video Teleconference (VTC) and choose to have their hearing heard in person. Under the proposed rule change SSA states, "We propose that parties to a hearing will not have the option to opt out of appearing by the manner of hearing we choose. We also propose rules that explain how we will determine the manner of a party's or a witness's appearance. We expect these proposed changes would improve our service to the public by increasing the efficiency of our hearings processes and reducing the amount of time it takes us to schedule and hold hearings."

[Further information can be found here.](#)



Genex Staff Spotlight

Jennifer Hallacker Operations Lead

Jen started as a Phone Team member in May of 2016 where her talent was quickly identified. She then moved into the Medical Records Coordinator position until a recent promotion to Operations Lead for Phone Team and Biller Team. Jen is a great compliment to our department as a whole and is always working hard to ensure consistency and excellence at every stage of a claim. She's a pleasure to work with and focuses on bringing positivity and encouragement to her team. When done with the work day she enjoys time with her husband & 2 cats.



Three New SSA Rulings Issued

On October 2, 2018, the Social Security Administration issued three new Social Security Rulings (SSR). SSR 18-01p, SSR 18-02p, and SSR 18-3p clarify how SSA determines the established onset date (EOD) for disability and blindness claims, as well as provides guidance for how SSA applies its "Failure to Follow Prescribed Treatment" policy. SSR 18-01p specifically addresses how SSA determines the EOD in claims that involve "traumatic, non-traumatic, and exacerbating and remitting impairments. Additionally, this SSR clarifies that an Administrative Law Judge

(ALJ) may, but is not required to, call upon the services of a medical expert, to assist with inferring the date the claimant first met the statutory definition of disability."

Further information can be at the links below.

https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/rulings/di/01/SSR2018-01-di-01.html

https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/rulings/di/02/SSR2018-03-di-02.html