Social Security Disability Hearing Backlog Growing Again, Allsup Reports

Number of people waiting in the hearing backlog approaches 1 million; Allsup explains importance of having a representative when filing an SSDI appeal

Belleville, IL (PRWEB) February 24, 2014 -- The line of people waiting to attend a hearing for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits is growing closer to 1 million, highlighting the importance of having a representative when applying for SSDI benefits, according to Allsup. The Belleville, Ill.-based company has helped hundreds of thousands of people qualify for SSDI benefits.

As of December 2013, 903,720 people had filed an appeal and were waiting for a hearing before an administrative law judge, according to Allsup’s review of data released by the Social Security Administration (SSA). This is a nearly 7 percent increase from 847,984 hearings pending at the end of fiscal year 2013, and a 17 percent increase from 771,318 hearings pending in FY 2011.

“As the wait grow longer, more and more people are enduring significant financial hardship to receive SSDI benefits through a program they funded while they were working,” said Mike Stein, Allsup assistant vice president of claims.

The first-quarter FY 2014 data also showed that hearing wait times had increased to 393 days from 382 days in FY 2013. Click here to see a state-by-state ranking of pending hearings, based on Allsup’s analysis of SSA data.

“If your application was denied and you must appeal your SSDI benefits claim, it’s important to avoid waiting to file and get help from a disability representative like Allsup,” Stein said.

The growing Social Security disability backlog illustrates the challenges of meeting the federal agency’s goals outlined in its FY 2008-13 Agency Strategic Plan. “Social Security had planned to reduce the hearing backlog to 466,000 claims and the average processing time to 270 days, but a number of factors have worked against this,” Stein said.

Restricted funding has led Social Security to cut the hours its field offices are open to the public. In addition, the average wait time for calls going to the SSA’s national 800-number have increased. Since September 2010, the SSA has lost more than 7,400 employees from its workforce, according to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

At the same time that wait times are growing, it’s becoming more difficult to receive SSDI benefits. For example, the SSA reported that 89,332 people were granted benefits in December 2012. A year later, that number was reduced to 61,983 in December 2013, a 30 percent decline.

SSDI is a federally mandated insurance program that provides monthly benefits to individuals who are under full retirement age (65-67) and who can no longer work because of a severe, long-term or terminal disability. FICA payroll taxes paid by workers and their employers fund the program, which is administered by the SSA.

Help When Filing An SSDI Appeal

PRWeb ebooks - Another online visibility tool from PRWeb
Allsup outlines the following steps when planning to file a disability appeal for SSDI benefits.

1. **Get help.** Those who applied for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits without a representative have the opportunity to get help with a disability appeal. At the hearing level of the SSDI program, nearly eight in 10 applicants have a representative like Allsup.

2. **Don’t give up.** When people apply for SSDI and are denied benefits, they may decide to give up on their application. It’s important to pursue a disability appeal because delaying or missing important dates can hurt someone’s claim. For instance, those who decide to wait and apply later may wait too long and become uninsured. The SSA requires individuals to be fully and currently insured in order to receive SSDI benefits. Generally, this means having a work history of five out of the last 10 years—and waiting too long could mean missing this window.

3. **Provide documentation and details.** It may take the SSA two years or longer to review an SSDI claim through the appeals process, which points to the importance of good documentation. “Continue to work closely with your doctors to document updates, new tests and test results,” Stein said. “It’s also important to correct any errors, explain changes and provide more detail with your SSDI appeal, which is another reason to get help from a representative.”

More than 168,000 people applied for SSDI benefits in December 2013 and entered the growing line for review of their disability insurance claims.

“Perhaps even more critical for new SSDI applicants is to realize they can get expert disability help with their application by filing with a representative like Allsup,” Stein said. “That expertise and attention to your claim could help you receive benefits as early as your initial application, which means avoiding disability appeals altogether.”

Find more information about disability appeal representation on Allsup’s website, Allsup.com.

For answers to questions about eligibility for SSDI benefits, contact an Allsup SSDI specialist for a free evaluation at (800) 678-3276.

ABOUT ALLSUP

Allsup is a nationwide provider of Social Security disability, veterans disability appeal, Medicare and Medicare Secondary Payer compliance services for individuals, employers and insurance carriers. Allsup professionals deliver specialized services supporting people with disabilities and seniors so they may lead lives that are as financially secure and as healthy as possible. Founded in 1984, the company is based in Belleville, Ill., near St. Louis. For more information, go to Allsup.com or visit Allsup on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/Allsupinc.
Contact Information
Rebecca Ray
Allsup
http://www.Allsup.com
+1 (800) 854-1418 Ext: 65065

Tai Venuti
Allsup
http://www.Allsup.com
(800) 854-1418 68573

Online Web 2.0 Version
You can read the online version of this press release here.