

Re: Social Security Disability Decision to Add Early-Onset (Younger-Onset) Alzheimer's Disease to Compassionate Allowance List of Conditions

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has decided to add early-onset (younger-onset) Alzheimer's disease to the list of conditions under its Compassionate Allowance Initiative. Below please find some questions and answers that help explain the importance and details of this decision.

What is the Compassionate Allowance Initiative?

Under this initiative, SSA will find individuals with certain diseases/conditions eligible for Social Security disability (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits by the nature of the disease. While applicants would still have to meet other SSDI criteria and/or SSI criteria, when it comes to the disability criterion, they would be considered eligible by virtue of the disease and fast-tracked for a favorable decision about their eligibility for SSDI and SSI benefits.

What is Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)?

Social Security disability benefits (SSDI) are paid to individuals who have worked for enough years and who have a condition that is so severe that they are not able to work. Administered by the SSA, SSDI makes monthly payments to eligible disabled individuals and is a significant benefit for individuals with early-onset (younger-onset) Alzheimer's disease. In addition to the monthly payment, it is the entry to Medicare benefits for the under 65 population. Family members (for example, spouses and minor children) may also be eligible for benefits on the applicant's work record.

What is Supplemental Security Income (SSI)?

Supplemental Security Income benefits (SSI) are paid each month to individuals who are aged, blind or **disabled** and have limited income and resources (assets). The "disability" criteria for SSI are the same as for SSDI benefits. Unlike SSDI, eligibility for SSI is not based on prior work experience. In addition, in most states, individuals who receive SSI are also automatically eligible for Medicaid (medical assistance) benefits.

Who does this Compassionate Allowance affect?

It only affects individuals with early-onset (younger-onset) Alzheimer's disease and related dementias; generally, **those individuals who are diagnosed under 65 years old**. It does not affect individuals who are currently receiving full Social Security retirement benefits.

als with early-onset (young-onset) Alzheimer's

Social Security disability benefits are very important to individuals with early-onset (younger-onset) Alzheimer's and related dementias who are often initially denied benefits but usually win on appeal. By adding Alzheimer's disease to the list of "Compassionate Allowance" conditions, it will simplify and streamline the SSDI/SSI application process and should result in them receiving SSDI/SSI benefits faster.

When applying for SSDI and/or SSI, the applicant will have to submit to SSA objective medical records that confirm that the applicant has been diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease.

When is the effective date of the change? What if someone applied for SSDI or SSI benefits before Alzheimer's disease was added to the Compassionate Allowance list of conditions?

The effective date of the addition of early-onset Alzheimer's disease to the Compassionate Allowance list is February 27, 2010. The Compassionate Allowance fast-tracking process should be used for all Alzheimer's disease cases at the initial application or at the reconsideration, hearing or Appeals Council levels.

Is there a difference between early-onset and younger-onset Alzheimer's disease?

No, there is not a difference and the terms are used interchangeably.

Are there any "related dementias" currently on the Compassionate Allowance list?

Yes. In addition to early-onset (younger -onset) Alzheimer's disease, there are four "related dementias" on the Compassionate Allowance List. They are: frontotemporal dementia (FTD) ó Pick's disease, Creutzfeldt - Jakob disease, mixed-dementia and primary progressive aphasia. Again, this initiative only applies to individuals who are not receiving full Social Security retirement benefits and have these specific "related dementias."

How do I apply for SSDI or SSI?

To apply for SSDI or SSI benefits, you will need to submit an application and other documents at your local SSA office. The Alzheimer's Association has prepared a checklist to assist individuals with the application process. See *Checklist for Applying for Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income Benefits due to Early-Onset (Younger-Onset) Alzheimer's Disease*. In addition, SSA has a wealth of information on its disability programs at www.socialsecurity.gov including a special section on disability planner at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/dibplan/>



*Your complimentary
use period has ended.
Thank you for using
PDF Complete.*

**Click Here to upgrade to
Unlimited Pages and Expanded Features**

Receiving early retirement benefits from Social

Yes, if you are receiving early retirement benefits, you should apply for SSDI because your benefits should increase and you may become eligible for Medicare before you turn 65.

More information about the Compassionate Allowances Initiative can be found at <http://www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances/>