

# Social Security Disability & Supplemental Security Income

PRESENTED BY  
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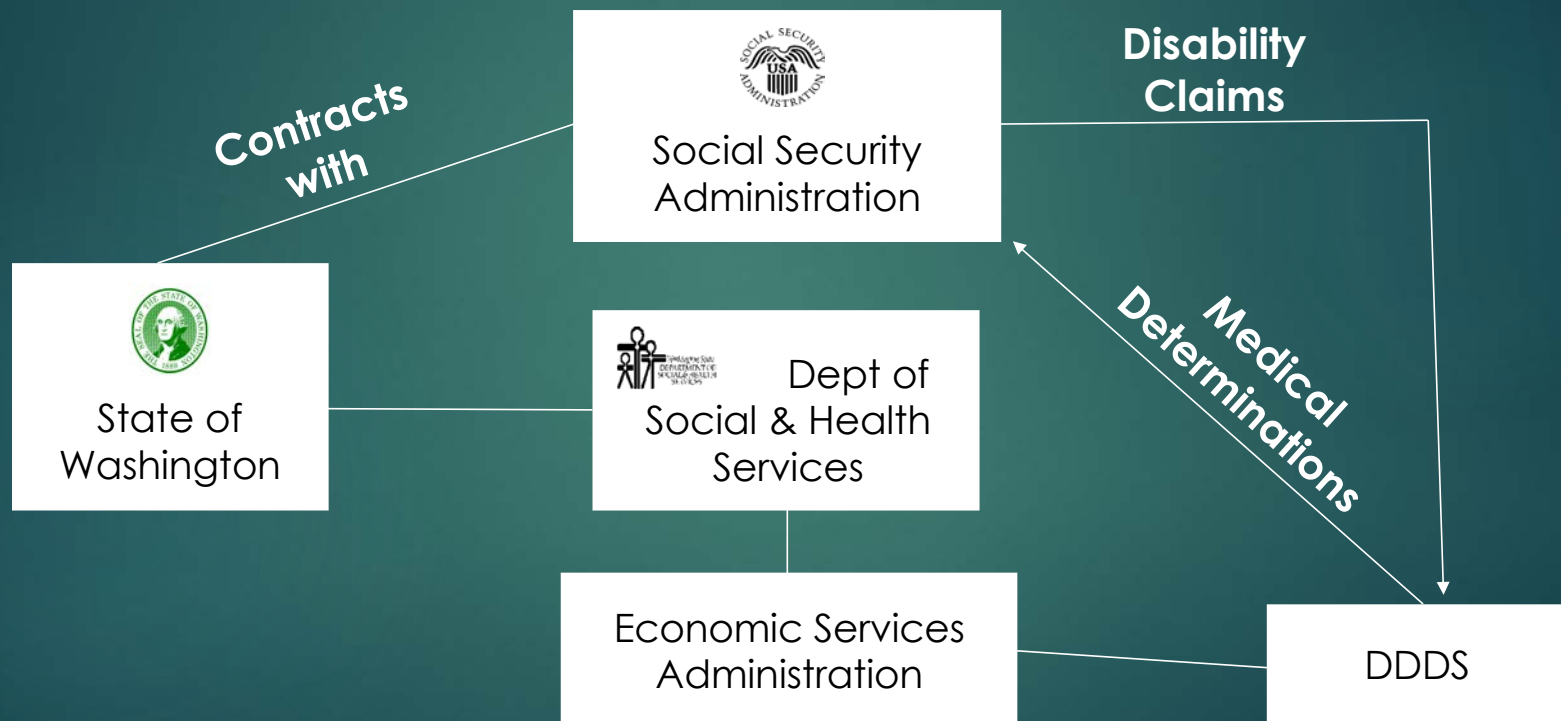


# Disability Determination Services

- ▶ DDDS provides medical determination for Social Security Administration
- ▶ 3 offices in Washington State
  - Olympia (HQ)
  - Federal Way
  - Spokane



# The Relationship



# Types of Disability Claims

- ▶ DDDS makes determinations on four different types of claims for Social Security
  - Initial
  - Reconsideration
  - Continuing Disability Review (CDR)
  - Continuing Disability Review Reconsideration (Hearings Unit)



# What is the Determination Process?



- ▶ Application is taken/received at the Social Security office
- ▶ Folder is sent to the DDDS
- ▶ Priority cases are identified
- ▶ Adjudicators and Medical Consultants - review claim and make medical determination
- ▶ Claim sent back to the Social Security office for processing

# Appeals Process

- ▶ 60 days to file an appeal
- ▶ Include additional or missing information
- ▶ Reconsideration is sent to the DDDS
  - Different adjudicator and different Medical Consultant review the case
- ▶ New determination made
- ▶ Denied again? Appeal to ALJ



# “Disability” Definition

Inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity

By reason of:

Any medically determinable severe physical or mental impairment or impairments

Which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or is expected to last 12 consecutive months or more

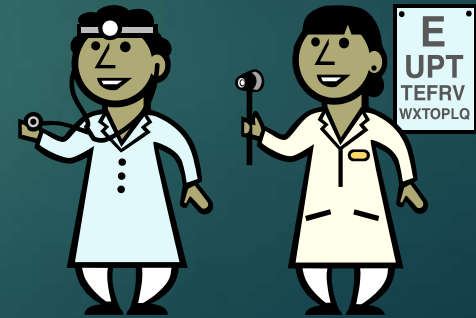
# What is a Medically Determinable Impairment?

- ▶ An impairment which results from abnormalities which are:
  - Anatomical, physiological, or psychological
  - Demonstrated by medically acceptable clinical or laboratory diagnostic techniques
  - Signs, laboratory findings, or both



# Acceptable Medical Sources

- ▶ Licensed doctors of medicine (MD)
- ▶ Licensed doctors of osteopathy (DO)
- ▶ Licensed or certified psychologists (PhD or PsyD)
- ▶ Licensed podiatrist (DPM)
- ▶ Optometrist for measurement of visual acuity and visual fields (OD)
- ▶ Speech and language pathologists (SLP/CCC)



# On or After March 27, 2017

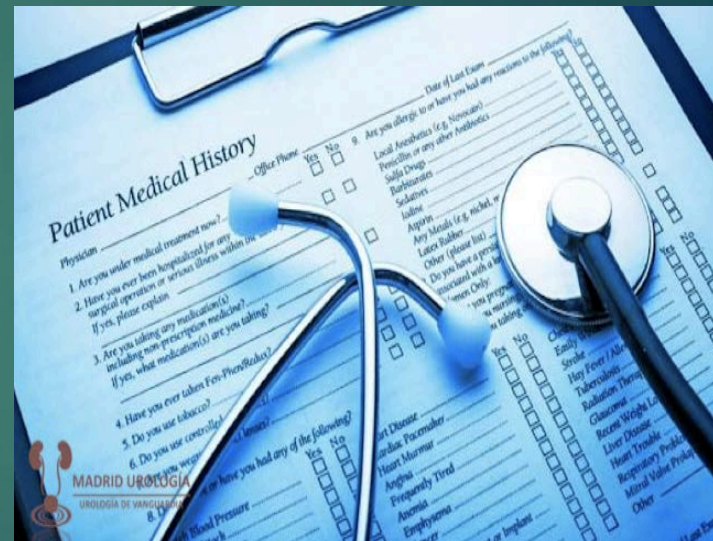
- ▶ Physician Assistants
- ▶ Audiologists
- ▶ Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN)
  - Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM)
  - Nurse Practitioner (NP)
  - Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)
  - Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA)

# Other Sources

- ▶ Private and public welfare agencies
- ▶ Mental health therapists
- ▶ Physical and occupational therapists
- ▶ Chiropractors, naturopaths
- ▶ Vocational counselors
- ▶ 3<sup>rd</sup> party questionnaires

# Consultative Examinations

- ▶ No medical evidence
- ▶ Existing evidence cannot be obtained
- ▶ Insufficient evidence
  - Lack of current medical evidence
  - Conflict, inconsistency, or ambiguity
  - Specialized tests
  - Medical is not from a medically acceptable source



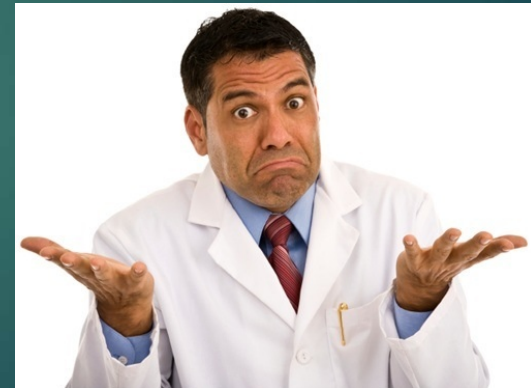
# Consultative Examinations (continue)

- ▶ Doctors agree to perform examinations at our fees
- ▶ Doctors dictate appointment schedule
- ▶ Missed appointments cause significant delay in case processing
- ▶ 33% of cases need examinations
- ▶ Transportation and interpreters can be provided
- ▶ Reports should be detailed and specific

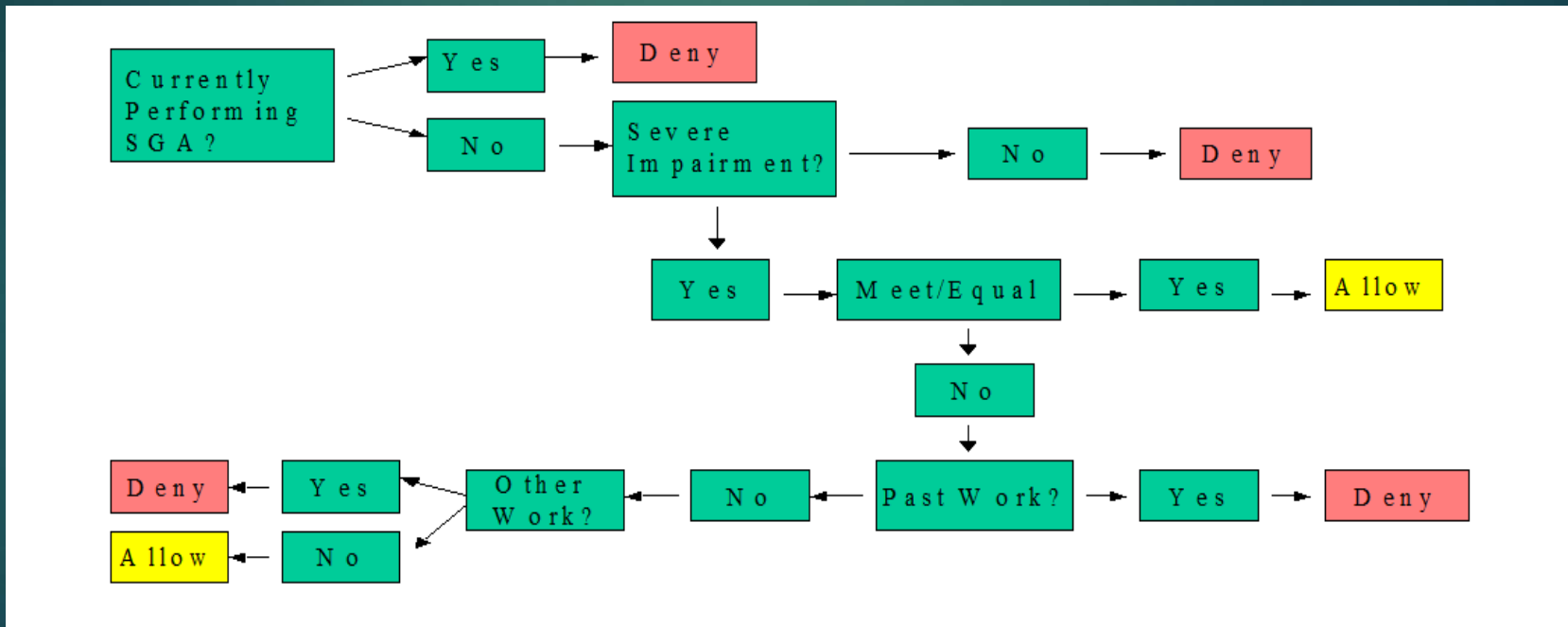
# Why Not Treating Physician?

Regulations state treating doctor is the best choice for evaluations, however, 90% do not want to perform examinations

- ▶ Conflict of interest
- ▶ Hurt doctor/patient relationship
- ▶ No time
- ▶ Low reimbursement rates



# Sequential Evaluation – Initial and Reconsideration Claims



# Criteria for Disability

- ▶ Medical criteria
- ▶ Organized by body systems



<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook>



# Medical Criteria

- ▶ Listing preamble – gives specific details

Is the impairment(s) at list level severity?

- ▶ To be automatically medically allowed:
  - Meet listing
  - Equate listing

# Does Not Meet or Equal?

- ▶ Functional assessment – residual functional capacity
- ▶ After functional assessment, determination is based upon factors
  - Past work
  - Age
  - Education



# Medical Vocational



- ▶ Past 15 years of work history
- ▶ Claimant description versus the DOT
- ▶ Age brackets
  - Younger person: Under 50
  - Person closely approaching advanced age: 50-54
  - Person of advanced age: 55-59
  - Person closely approaching retirement age: 60+

# Initial Claim Statistics



Nation  
(initial claims FY 2017)

2,448,734 decisions  
Allowed: 33.4%  
Denied: 66.6%

Washington State  
(initial claims FY 2017)

50,122 decisions  
Allowed: 38.1%  
Denied: 61.9%

# Quality Assurance

- ▶ Random selection at both state and federal level
- ▶ Review of overall development and documentation
- ▶ To promote consistent application and understanding of Social Security Disability policy



# Quality Assurance Statistics



State Level  
(all case types)

10,513 claims  
13.5%

Federal Level  
(all case types)

10,287 claims  
13.2%

# How You Can Help



- ▶ Assist claimant in submitting completed forms (i.e. complete addresses, phone numbers, etc.)
- ▶ Be specific and provide details
- ▶ Include medical/school records if possible
- ▶ Assist claimant in attending consultative examination(s) if scheduled
- ▶ Provide observations

# Observations



- ▶ While in interview, is the claimant able to sit, concentrate, and answer questions?
- ▶ Does the claimant need redirection or directions have to be repeated?
- ▶ How is the claimant's hygiene?
- ▶ Is the claimant forgetful? (i.e. unable to remember dates or past events)
- ▶ Could there be another impairment the claimant is not alleging?



# Useful Websites

- ▶ <http://www.socialsecurity.gov>
  - Disability and SSI: Do you qualify? Apply for disability benefits. Already receiving benefits? Other disability information
- ▶ <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability>
- ▶ <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/professionals>
  - Consultative examination guidelines
  - HIPAA information
  - Information for health and school professionals
  - Disability Evaluation Under Social Security (blue book)

# Washington DDDS Phone Numbers



## Olympia

1-800-562-6074

Toll free fax: 1-866-324-3313

## Federal Way

1-800-843-4440

Toll free fax: 1-866-625-3815

## Spokane

1-800-572-5299

Toll free fax: 1-866-478-0546



# Questions??

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