

(j) Our rules on when disability continues and stops are contained in § 404.1579 and §§ 404.1588 through 404.1598. We explain what your responsibilities are in telling us of any events that may cause a change in your disability status, when you may have a trial work period, and when we will review to see if you are still disabled. We also explain how we consider the issue of medical improvement (and the exceptions to medical improvement) in deciding whether you are still disabled.

[45 FR 55584, Aug. 20, 1980, as amended at 50 FR 50126, Dec. 6, 1985; 56 FR 57941, Nov. 14, 1991; 57 FR 30120, July 8, 1992; 68 FR 51161, Aug. 26, 2003]

§ 404.1502 General definitions and terms for this subpart.

As used in the subpart—

Acceptable medical source refers to one of the sources described in § 404.1513(a) who provides evidence about your impairments. It includes treating sources, nontreating sources, and nonexamining sources.

Commissioner means the Commissioner of Social Security or his or her authorized designee.

Medical sources refers to acceptable medical sources, or other health care providers who are not acceptable medical sources.

Nonexamining source means a physician, psychologist, or other acceptable medical source who has not examined you but provides a medical or other opinion in your case. At the administrative law judge hearing and Appeals Council levels of the administrative review process, and at the Federal reviewing official, administrative law judge, and Decision Review Board levels of the administrative review process in claims adjudicated under the procedures in part 405 of this chapter, it includes State agency medical and psychological consultants, other program physicians and psychologists, and medical experts or psychological experts we consult. See § 404.1527.

Nontreating source means a physician, psychologist, or other acceptable medical source who has examined you but does not have, or did not have, an ongoing treatment relationship with you. The term includes an acceptable medical source who is a consultative exam-

iner for us, when the consultative examiner is not your treating source. See § 404.1527.

State agency means that agency of a State which has been designated by the State to carry out the disability or blindness determination function.

Treating source means your own physician, psychologist, or other acceptable medical source who provides you, or has provided you, with medical treatment or evaluation and who has, or has had, an ongoing treatment relationship with you. Generally, we will consider that you have an ongoing treatment relationship with an acceptable medical source when the medical evidence establishes that you see, or have seen, the source with a frequency consistent with accepted medical practice for the type of treatment and/or evaluation required for your medical condition(s). We may consider an acceptable medical source who has treated or evaluated you only a few times or only after long intervals (e.g., twice a year) to be your treating source if the nature and frequency of the treatment or evaluation is typical for your condition(s). We will not consider an acceptable medical source to be your treating source if your relationship with the source is not based on your medical need for treatment or evaluation, but solely on your need to obtain a report in support of your claim for disability. In such a case, we will consider the acceptable medical source to be a nontreating source.

We or us refers to either the Social Security Administration or the State agency making the disability or blindness determination.

You or your means, as appropriate, the person who applies for benefits or for a period of disability, the person for whom an application is filed, or the person who is receiving benefits based on disability or blindness.

[56 FR 36954, Aug. 1, 1991, as amended at 62 FR 38451, July 18, 1997; 65 FR 11875, Mar. 7, 2000; 71 FR 16443, Mar. 31, 2006]

DETERMINATIONS

§ 404.1503 Who makes disability and blindness determinations.

(a) *State agencies.* State agencies make disability and blindness determinations for the Commissioner for most persons living in the State. State agencies make these disability and blindness determinations under regulations containing performance standards and other administrative requirements relating to the disability and blindness determination function. States have the option of turning the function over to the Federal Government if they no longer want to make disability determinations. Also, the Commissioner may take the function away from any State which has substantially failed to make disability and blindness determinations in accordance with these regulations. Subpart Q of this part contains the rules the States must follow in making disability and blindness determinations.

(b) *Social Security Administration.* The Social Security Administration will make disability and blindness determinations for—

(1) Any person living in a State which is not making for the Commissioner any disability and blindness determinations or which is not making those determinations for the class of claimants to which that person belongs; and

(2) Any person living outside the United States.

(c) *What determinations are authorized.* The Commissioner has authorized the State agencies and the Social Security Administration to make determinations about—

(1) Whether you are disabled or blind;

(2) The date your disability or blindness began; and

(3) The date your disability or blindness stopped.

(d) *Review of State Agency determinations.* On review of a State agency determination or redetermination of disability or blindness we may find that—

(1) You are, or are not, disabled or blind, regardless of what the State agency found;

(2) Your disability or blindness began earlier or later than the date found by the State agency; and

(3) Your disability or blindness stopped earlier or later than the date found by the State agency.

(e) *Initial determinations for mental impairments.* An initial determination by a State agency or the Social Security Administration that you are not disabled (or a Social Security Administration review of a State agency's initial determination), in any case where there is evidence which indicates the existence of a mental impairment, will be made only after every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist has completed the medical portion of the case review and any applicable residual functional capacity assessment. If the services of qualified psychiatrists or psychologists cannot be obtained because of impediments at the State level, the Commissioner may contract directly for the services. In a case where there is evidence of mental and nonmental impairments and a qualified psychologist serves as a psychological consultant, the psychologist will evaluate only the mental impairment, and a physician will evaluate the nonmental impairment.

[46 FR 29204, May 29, 1981, as amended at 52 FR 33926, Sept. 9, 1987; 62 FR 38451, July 18, 1997; 65 FR 34957, June 1, 2000; 71 FR 16443, Mar. 31, 2006; 72 FR 51177, Sept. 6, 2007]

§ 404.1503a Program integrity.

We will not use in our program any individual or entity, except to provide existing medical evidence, who is currently excluded, suspended, or otherwise barred from participation in the Medicare or Medicaid programs, or any other Federal or Federally-assisted program; whose license to provide health care services is currently revoked or suspended by any State licensing authority pursuant to adequate due process procedures for reasons bearing on professional competence, professional conduct, or financial integrity; or who, until a final determination is made, has surrendered such a license while formal disciplinary proceedings involving professional conduct are pending. By individual or entity we mean a medical or psychological consultant, consultative examination provider, or diagnostic