

How Important Is the Opinion of Your Physician When You Apply for Social Security Benefits?

Q: When applying for social security benefits, how important is it that your doctor support your claim?

A: It is extremely important that your doctor supports your claim. Your physician will have to provide a letter on your behalf that includes details of your condition, your outlook and why your condition prevents you from working. This document from your physician is vital to the strength of your case. In addition, a physician who supports the decision to file for disability will usually help assure all medical history documentation is submitted quickly. If your doctor does not support your decision to file for social security benefits, find one who does. If your doctor becomes unresponsive after you have already submitted your application, find a new one. It will be worth the time you will have to invest to find a new one. It can mean the difference between winning and losing your case. It is almost impossible to win a social security benefits claim with an unresponsive or unsupportive physician.

Q: Can forgetting to respond to a letter or notice affect your chances of being awarded social security benefits?

A: Yes, missing deadlines or ignoring notices can adversely affect your social security disability case. A claimant who has filed for social security benefits should be sure to immediately open any notices he receives from Social Security. You will receive a letter in the mail when your court date is scheduled for a hearing, for instance. Missing a court date can put your claim in jeopardy. Another example would be not opening a request for a medical examination. Again, not responding to such a request will delay your application and, possibly, lead to denial of social security benefits. Act and reply in a timely manner whenever you are sent anything from Social Security. It is also important that you know the timelines for filing an appeal and the required documentation to do so.

Q: Does Social Security deny every claim when it is initially reviewed?

A: No, not every application is denied when it is reviewed the first time. A great number of cases, however, will need to be reconsidered or heard before an administrative judge before they are granted benefits. There are many causes for this. Many applicants apply incorrectly or incompletely. Others apply over and over again, instead of filing an appeal. Social Security does approve some claims after they are initially reviewed. There are even more who win benefits after they are heard before an administrative judge. It would be wise to seek assistance from a social security lawyer, if you are worried that you cannot handle submitting complete and thorough required documents for your claim.

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