FAMILY VOICES®

Compassionate Allowances

What are the Social Security Administration (SSA) Compassionate Allowances (CALs)?

CALs are a way to quickly identify diseases and other medical conditions that meet Social Security's standards for disability benefits. These conditions include certain cancers, adult brain disorders, and number of rare disorders that affect children. The CAL program's goal is to reduce waiting times to reach a disability determination for individuals with the most serious disabilities.

SSA uses the same rules to determine CAL conditions for both Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Social Security's Definition of a Disability

"Disability" under SSA is for total disability. No benefits are payable for partial or short-term disability.

A person qualifies for a total disability if all the following are true:

- You cannot do work at the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level because of your medical condition
- You cannot do work you did previously or adjust to other work because of your medical condition
- Your condition has lasted or is expected to last for at least one year (12 consecutive months) or to result in death

For the full list of SSA disability requirements, read How Does Someone Become Eligible?

How are new CAL conditions identified?

Social Security Administration (SSA) receives information about CAL conditions from the public, comments received from the Social Security and Disability Determination Service communities, counsel from medical and scientific experts, research with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and information received from past public outreach hearings.

For the current list of CAL conditions, read Complete List of Conditions from SSA. This list is updated as new conditions are submitted.

Some diseases and conditions are so rare they might not be listed. If your child's condition is not on the list, your child's care team might be able to support you in submitting the condition to the CAL list.

Anyone can suggest the name of a condition or disease to add to the CAL list through SSA's website.

- Submit the Name of a Condition For Consideration | Compassionate Allowances | SSA

How do submit the name of a condition or disease for the list of CLAs?

You will need:

- Your contact information
- Name of the medical condition or disease
- Alternate names of the condition or disease
- A description of the condition
- Information about diagnostic testing, physical findings, and ICD-10-CM Coding (if available)
- Onset of the condition
- Progression of the condition
- Treatment of the condition

Send this information to compassionate.allowances@ssa.gov.

Learn more

For more information on policy issues that matter to children and youth with special health care needs and their families:

- Visit Family Voices' Public Policy webpage. Family Voices regularly releases new policy materials. Our Policy Education page has tools to help families learn about important policy issues.
- Subscribe to the Washington Update to receive regular plain language policy updates.