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Changes in the Social Security Laws

By Lala Balattan

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It is time we educate and update ourselves regarding essential issues of the Social Security Administration. By having enough knowledge of SSA's vital programs concerning Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Disability Insurance (DI), we would truly understand the workings ——— implementations, qualifications, claiming procedures, etc.

And since many policy changes have occurred with regards to the mentioned programs, it is but necessary that we may be aware of such things. Like, what new laws are enacted which covers disability beneficiaries of the DI program? Or if you have a relative which you think may qualify for the SSI/DI, how qualified? Here, we present you with vital facts on the SSI/DI programs' legislative changes that have occurred for the past, 20 years, between 1984 - 1999.

On the various policy revisions over the period of 1984 - 1999, these are mainly concerned on how to properly identify and analyze the beneficiaries entitled for the said programs.

The Social Security Disability Benefits Reform Act of 1984 revised the mental impairment listings for disabled workers. It also required that a combined effect of all impairments be taken into consideration when determining eligibility for disability benefits. A "medical improvement standard" was also added for the disability review process stating that an individual's disability benefits may be terminated with the basis of substantial evidence which shows that impairments have medically improved and the person concerned can already handle salaried work.

Various laws have also been implemented in order to enhance the DI programs like, the Social Security Disability Benefits Reform Act of 1984, which revised the mental impairment listings. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, set criteria that were more restrictive for childhood stability. The Public Law 104-121 eliminated drug and alcohol addiction from the medical listings of disabilities. The Fair Housing Act (FHA), as amended in 1988, makes housing more accessible to the disabled and prohibits discriminations. So as with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

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Both the Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries' population have experienced marked growth and compositional changes from 1984 - 1999. As such, the revisions and new laws which added up to the total package of these programs have further enhanced and have enabled the government to reach out its services further to its needy citizens. It is but important to be always updated and aware of the programs of the Social Security which concerns every individuals in the country.

Information is already empowerment. For more specific ideas on how the Social Security programs work and for further updates, connect with the official website of the Social Security at www.ssa.gov or go directly to the Social Security Administration's Information Offices in your state! Don't waste your time being unaware of opportunities that may entitle you and your family to government services!

Social Security and Living with AIDS

By Viojieley Gurrobat

Over the years, cases of people living with HIV/AIDS have increased. Although treatment for AIDS and HIV exist, there is no known cure until today. People with AIDS are confronted with the problem of coping up with pressing health and income needs. They are also often placed in an uncomfortable situation by people who judge them based on their illness. Although there are only a few known ways of transmitting this disease, a lot of people are still unaware of this. As a result they shun away from them in times they are needed most. The worst part of having this disease is when family members or relatives are not able to give their support, be it financially or emotionally. Hence, it is important to know that just like knowing that someone you care has cancer or deafness, having AIDS can let you know things about someone or about yourself that you haven't really thought of. Who knows, you might actually learn something valuable about human nature from someone who has this disease.

AIDS can no doubt destabilize a society in various ways. It can change how society treats people with this illness, it can weaken the economy and it can shatter families and communities. AIDS can also financially injure you. So how can you comply with the complex and extensive treatment and cope with your daily expenses when you are physically unable to work? Fortunately, people living with AIDS can also claim for Social Security benefits. The programs that are often involved for people with AIDS are Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Although medical eligibility for these programs is the same, there are some differences between these two. Basically, you pay for SSDI with your Social Security taxes when you work. The amount of your monthly benefit depends on how much you earned when you were working. On the other hand, people who do not qualify for Social Security or whose Social Security benefits are low may qualify for SSI if they have low income and limited resources.

When you are thinking of applying for Social Security, you need to discuss this with your doctor. If you think you are ready to file for benefits, you can begin the application by contacting the Social Security Administration. Social Security is there to help you manage financially and help you receive the medical care you deserve. But sometimes, Social Security rules and regulations can be confusing and complicated to understand. It is, therefore, sometimes okay and necessary to seek legal help. Lawyers who have knowledge of the Social Security law can help you go through the process confidently and

smoothly as much as possible.

Viojieley Gurrobat loves readings books in her spare time. She writes stories and poems about anything under the sun. For comments and suggestions kindly visit



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