Social Security is more than retirement. We request more than 15 million medical records from about 500,000 providers to help make decisions on over three million disability claims annually. This makes us one of the largest disability insurers in the world. We also administer the Supplemental Security Income program (also known as SSI), which makes payments to people who have limited income and resources and are blind, disabled or aged.

We work in partnership with the State Disability Determination Services to determine whether someone meets Social Security's definition of disability.

Today, most of the medical records we receive are in the form of faxed or scanned images. The current process of requesting and gathering medical records is cumbersome and is the most frequent source of delay in the disability determination process.

We can improve the speed and consistency of disability determinations with the use of health information technology (health IT). Health IT enables us to reduce the amount of time we need to make a disability determination by allowing us to electronically request and receive health records. With health IT, we are able to receive medical records within minutes or hours as compared to weeks or months in the traditional process. Health IT also allows us to analyze the data in health records electronically.

We continue to find innovative ways to maximize the use of health IT in our disability claims process. These innovations will:

- Improve service to the public;
- Streamline processes;
- Assist our state partners; and
- Reduce our burden on the health care industry.

To find out more, please visit us at *www.socialsecurity.gov/hit*.

"Everyone benefits when we use health IT in the Social Security disability claims process: medical providers, insurers, patients, government agencies – and the taxpayer."

Kitt Winter, Director,
Health IT Program Office,
Social Security Administration

"Kaiser Permanente is dedicated to supporting safe and secure health information exchange for members and our work with Social Security will enable our patients to obtain quicker disability decisions on their benefits."

Lisa Caplan,
Senior Vice President and
Business Information Officer
Kaiser Permanente

HealthIT
Health Information Technology

(over)

Readiness for Electronic Medical Record Exchange

Since 2008, Social Security has been working with other Federal and private organizations to enable the electronic exchange of health information and improve the disability determination process. We currently are exchanging health information electronically with numerous organizations and are working to bring on additional organizations throughout the next year. We are eager to share our needs and lessons learned to help you prepare your organization for the electronic exchange of health information.

Readiness – Internal Review

To determine if your organization can benefit from health IT, consider the following:

- Is health IT in alignment with your organization's objectives?
- Does your organization have medical records they could share electronically?
- Does your organization have the infrastructure capability to exchange electronic data?
- Does your organization have the budget and resource allocation necessary for a health IT initiative?

Readiness – Our Needs

Social Security has unique data requirements in order to obtain enough medical information to make a disability determination. If we are able to obtain substantive information, we can dramatically reduce the time it takes to make a disability determination. We would need your organization to:

- Accept patient authorizations to release medical information; and
- Provide the following medical information:
  —Health problems and medication lists;
  —Patient encounter information;
  —Admission summaries and other medical notes;
  —Procedures information and interpretation; and
  —Information regarding treatments.

Next Steps

Getting ready to exchange information electronically with Social Security requires planning. The health IT journey is a rewarding one. Below are some of the potential benefits for collaborating with Social Security. If you are ready to start a dialog with us, contact us at *www.socialsecurity.gov/hit*.

Potential Benefits for Health Care Providers:

- Reduced administrative costs and labor time for locating, printing, copying, and mailing paper records
- Reduced uncompensated care as faster disability determinations may result in patients having quicker access to Medicare and Medicaid benefits
- Increased revenue by having the ability to respond to a higher number of Social Security requests for records
- Automated payment from Social Security
- Improved patient satisfaction

Potential Benefits for the Public:

- Faster and more consistent disability decisions
- Quicker access to monthly cash benefits and financial peace-of-mind
- Earlier access to medical insurance coverage
- Fewer consultative examinations
- Decreased burden to provide medical records
- Earlier access to other social service benefits