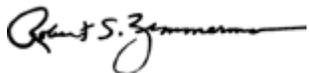


	MEDICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA * DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE	
	SUBJECT Revised Social Security Administration Definition of Disability for Children	BY  Robert S. Zimmerman, Jr., M.P.H. Deputy Secretary for Medical Assistance Programs
NUMBER:	99-97-05	
ISSUE DATE:	August 8, 1997	
EFFECTIVE DATE:	August 8, 1997	

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this bulletin is to prepare providers for an increase in requests for medical evaluations and medical history records for children who are disabled and are currently receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.

SCOPE:

This bulletin applies to all providers enrolled in the Medical Assistance Program and all Health Maintenance Organizations and Behavioral Health Managed Care Organizations under contract with the Department of Public Welfare.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

The federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (Public Law 104-193), enacted on August 22, 1996, contains provisions that will result in significant changes in the evaluation of disabilities for children receiving SSI. The Social Security Administration (SSA) is required to redetermine the eligibility of those individuals under the age of 18 who were receiving SSI disability benefits as of the enactment date, and whose eligibility may terminate as a result of the new law.

The new definition of disability for children:

1. requires a child to have a physical or mental condition(s) which is(are) medically proven and which results in marked and severe functional limitations;
2. requires that the medically proven physical or mental condition(s) must last or be expected to last at least 12 months or be expected to result in death; and
3. states that a child may not be considered disabled if he/she is working at a job that is considered to be substantial work.

The new definition applies to all applications filed on or after August 22, 1996, and to applicants whose claims were not finally adjudicated as of that date.

The law requires the SSA to review each child's case. Each child's representative payee will be asked to provide information on the child's medical or mental condition at the initial review. If the child's benefits are terminated and the representative payee appeals the decision, additional evidence of the child's medical or mental condition may be requested.

In light of these changes, providers should prepare for the following:

1. an increase in medical evaluations and follow-up treatment for children under the age of 18;
2. an increase in requests for medical records;
3. an increase in requests for help in obtaining medical records from previous medical providers; and

4. an increase in requests for help in submitting information to the SSA.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

The appropriate toll-free inquiry line for your provider type.

Visit the Office of Medical Assistance Programs website at www.dpw.state.pa.us/omap.