

## § 416.902

## 20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–10 Edition)

416.998. We explain what your responsibilities are in telling us of any events that may cause a change in your disability or blindness status and when we will review to see if you are still disabled. We also explain how we consider the issue of medical improvement (and the exceptions to medical improvement) in determining whether you are still disabled.

[45 FR 55621, Aug. 20, 1980, as amended at 50 FR 50136, Dec. 6, 1985; 56 FR 5553, Feb. 11, 1991; 56 FR 57944, Nov. 14, 1991; 62 FR 6420, Feb. 11, 1997; 65 FR 42788, July 11, 2000; 65 FR 54777, Sept. 11, 2000; 68 FR 51164, Aug. 26, 2003]

### § 416.902 General definitions and terms for this subpart.

As used in this subpart—

*Acceptable medical source* refers to one of the sources described in § 416.913(a) who provides evidence about your impairments. It includes treating sources, nontreating sources, and nonexamining sources.

*Adult* means a person who is age 18 or older.

*Child* means a person who has not attained age 18.

*Commissioner* means the Commissioner of Social Security.

*Disability redetermination* means a redetermination of your eligibility based on disability using the rules for new applicants appropriate to your age, except the rules pertaining to performance of substantial gainful activity. For individuals who are working and for whom a disability redetermination is required, we will apply the rules in §§ 416.260 ff. In conducting a disability redetermination, we will not use the rules for determining whether disability continues set forth in § 416.994 or § 416.994a. (See § 416.987.)

*Impairment(s)* means a medically determinable physical or mental impairment or a combination of medically determinable physical or mental impairments.

*The listings* means the Listing of Impairments in appendix 1 of subpart P of part 404 of this chapter. When we refer to an impairment(s) that “meets, medically equals, or functionally equals the listings,” we mean that the impairment(s) meets or medically equals the severity of any listing in appendix 1 of subpart P of part 404 of this

chapter, as explained in §§ 416.925 and 416.926, or that it functionally equals the severity of the listings, as explained in § 416.926a.

*Marked and severe functional limitations*, when used as a phrase, means the standard of disability in the Social Security Act for children claiming SSI benefits based on disability. It is a level of severity that meets, medically equals, or functionally equals the listings. (See §§ 416.906, 416.924, and 416.926a.) The words “marked” and “severe” are also separate terms used throughout this subpart to describe measures of functional limitations; the term “marked” is also used in the listings. (See §§ 416.924 and 416.926a.) The meaning of the words “marked” and “severe” when used as part of the phrase *marked and severe functional limitations* is not the same as the meaning of the separate terms “marked” and “severe” used elsewhere in 20 CFR 404 and 416. (See §§ 416.924(c) and 416.926a(e).)

*Medical sources* refers to acceptable medical sources, or other health care providers who are not acceptable medical sources.

*Nonexamining source* means a physician, psychologist, or other acceptable medical source who has not examined you but provides a medical or other opinion in your case. At the administrative law judge hearing and Appeals Council levels of the administrative review process, and at the Federal reviewing official, administrative law judge, and Decision Review Board levels of the administrative review process in claims adjudicated under the procedures in part 405 of this chapter, it includes State agency medical and psychological consultants, other program physicians and psychologists, and medical experts or psychological experts we consult. See § 416.927.

*Nontreating source* means a physician, psychologist, or other acceptable medical source who has examined you but does not have, or did not have, an ongoing treatment relationship with you. The term includes an acceptable medical source who is a consultative examiner for us, when the consultative examiner is not your treating source. See § 416.927.

*State agency* means that agency of a State which has been designated by the State to carry out the disability or blindness determination function.

*Treating source* means your own physician, psychologist, or other acceptable medical source who provides you, or has provided you, with medical treatment or evaluation and who has, or has had, an ongoing treatment relationship with you. Generally, we will consider that you have an ongoing treatment relationship with an acceptable medical source when the medical evidence establishes that you see, or have seen, the source with a frequency consistent with accepted medical practice for the type of treatment and/or evaluation required for your medical condition(s). We may consider an acceptable medical source who has treated or evaluated you only a few times or only after long intervals (e.g., twice a year) to be your treating source if the nature and frequency of the treatment or evaluation is typical for your condition(s). We will not consider an acceptable medical source to be your treating source if your relationship with the source is not based on your medical need for treatment or evaluation, but solely on your need to obtain a report in support of your claim for disability. In such a case, we will consider the acceptable medical source to be a non-treating source.

*We* or *us* refers to either the Social Security Administration or the State agency making the disability or blindness determination.

*You, your, me, my* and *I* mean, as appropriate, the person who applies for benefits, the person for whom an application is filed, or the person who is receiving benefits based on disability or blindness.

[56 FR 36962, Aug. 1, 1991, as amended at 58 FR 47577, Sept. 9, 1993; 62 FR 6420, Feb. 11, 1997; 62 FR 13733, Mar. 21, 1997; 65 FR 11878, Mar. 7, 2000; 65 FR 54777, Sept. 11, 2000; 65 FR 80308, Dec. 21, 2000; 71 FR 16458, Mar. 31, 2006]

#### DETERMINATIONS

#### §416.903 Who makes disability and blindness determinations.

(a) *State agencies.* State agencies make disability and blindness determinations for the Commissioner for

most persons living in the State. State agencies make these disability and blindness determinations under regulations containing performance standards and other administrative requirements relating to the disability and blindness determination function. States have the option of turning the function over to the Federal Government if they no longer want to make disability determinations. Also, the Commissioner may take the function away from any State which has substantially failed to make disability and blindness determinations in accordance with these regulations. Subpart J of this part contains the rules the States must follow in making disability and blindness determinations.

(b) *Social Security Administration.* The Social Security Administration will make disability and blindness determinations for—

(1) Any person living in a State which is not making for the Commissioner any disability and blindness determinations or which is not making those determinations for the class of claimants to which that person belongs; and

(2) Any person living outside the United States.

(c) *What determinations are authorized.* The Commissioner has authorized the State agencies and the Social Security Administration to make determinations about—

(1) Whether you are disabled or blind;

(2) The date your disability or blindness began; and

(3) The date your disability or blindness stopped.

(d) *Review of State agency determinations.* On review of a State agency determination or redetermination of disability or blindness we may find that—

(1) You are, or are not, disabled or blind, regardless of what the State agency found;

(2) Your disability or blindness began earlier or later than the date found by the State agency; and

(3) Your disability or blindness stopped earlier or later than the date found by the State agency.

(e) *Initial determinations for mental impairments.* An initial determination by a State agency or the Social Security