



## SOCIAL SECURITY

Date: May 7, 2003

To: Advocate for Disability Claimants and Claimants' Representatives

From: Sue Roecker  
Associate Commissioner  
for Disability Programs

Subject: Implementation of a Revised Form to Authorize Disclosure of Information  
For the Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income Programs--  
INFORMATION

We want to bring to your attention our new medical authorization form, redesigned to meet the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) as well as other federal and State disclosure laws. SSA and its affiliated State disability determination services use Form SSA-827, "Authorization to Disclose Information to the Social Security Administration (SSA)," to obtain medical and other information needed to determine whether or not a claimant is disabled. Its efficient handling and widespread acceptance is critical to the success of the disability programs. Each year, over 15 million SSA-827s are signed by claimants and forwarded to sources with our requests for information.

In HIPAA, Congress directed the Department of Health and Human Services to set standards to both protect the privacy of medical information and enable increased efficiency in health care operations. The privacy regulations (Privacy Rule, 45 CFR parts 160 and 164) under HIPAA require compliance by health care providers, beginning April 14, 2003. After that date, most sources of medical information will no longer accept old versions of the SSA-827. Therefore, please be sure to use the revised SSA-827 when helping claimants prepare the necessary parts of a disability claim. The correct version is labeled "Form SSA-827 (2-2003)". Please destroy any prior versions that you may have. Also, if the SSA-827 is completed outside the SSA field office, please provide a witness' signature in the space provided.

The primary objectives of the revised form are to:

- ensure the claimant has all the information necessary to make an informed consent, including the specifics of the disclosure and our use of the information to be obtained;
- make it more obvious to sources that the form contains all the elements and statements legally required to be on an authorization form; and
- maximize the efficiency of the form, as permitted by law, to support its use in electronic communications with providers.

SSA has a legal obligation to collect the evidence necessary to determine whether individuals are eligible for benefits. We encourage your continued cooperation with SSA by ensuring that you and your affiliates are aware of the new law and use the revised form as you assist those applying for disability benefits.

For now, SSA will continue to need one original signed authorization for each source of information identified (plus two more to cover multiple sources at one site, etc.). As we gain experience with providers' acceptance of copies of the signed form, we hope to be able to reduce the number of originals required.

A copy of the revised SSA-827 is enclosed. It is also available, together with other helpful information, on our website at: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/>.

We appreciate your efforts in working with this population and thank you for your understanding and assistance.

Enclosure