

Social Security

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Disability Insurance

(PPS-100)

SSR 83-20

SSR 83-20: TITLES II AND XVI: ONSET OF DISABILITY

PURPOSE: To state the policy and describe the relevant evidence to be considered when establishing the onset date of disability under the provisions of titles II and XVI of the Social Security Act (the Act) and implementing regulations.

CITATIONS (AUTHORITY): Sections 216(i), 223(a), 223(d), 1614(a) and 1621 of the Social Security Act, as amended; Regulations No. 4, Subpart P, sections 404.1505, 404.1509, 404.1577, 404.1581, and 404.1582; and Regulations No. 16, Subpart I, sections 416.905, 416.906, 416.907, 416.909, 416.981 and 416.982.

INTRODUCTION: In addition to determining that an individual is disabled, the decisionmaker must also establish the onset date of disability. In many claims, the onset date is critical; it may affect the period for which the individual can be paid and may even be determinative of whether the individual is entitled to or eligible for any benefits. In title II worker claims, the amount of the benefit may be affected; in title XVI claims, the amount of benefit payable for the first month of eligibility may be prorated. Consequently, it is essential that the onset date be correctly established and supported by the evidence, as explained in the policy statement.

In title II cases, disability insurance benefits (DIB) may be paid for as many as 12 months before the month an application is filed. Therefore, the earlier the onset date is set, the longer is the period of disability and the greater the protection received.

Under title XVI, there is no retroactivity of payment. Supplemental security income (SSI) payments are prorated for the first month for which eligibility is established after application and after a period of ineligibility. Therefore, except for certain cases of aliens where an exact onset date of disability must be determined for eligibility purposes, the only instances when the specific date of onset must be separately determined for a title XVI case is when the onset is subsequent to the date of filing or when it is necessary to determine whether the duration requirement is met.

POLICY STATEMENT: The onset date of disability is the first day an individual is disabled as defined in the Act and the regulations. Factors relevant to the determination of disability onset include the individual's allegation, the work history, and the medical evidence. These factors are often evaluated together to arrive at the onset date. However, the individual's allegation or the date of work stoppage is significant in determining onset only if it is consistent with the severity of the condition(s) shown by the medical evidence.

A title II worker cannot be found disabled under the Act unless insured status is also met at a time when the evidence establishes the presence of a disabling condition(s). Although important to the establishment of a period of disability and to the payment of benefits, the expiration of insured status is not itself a consideration in

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