

OUR SERVICES

OUR TEAM

RESOURCES

CONTACT US

## *The Politics of Social Security Disability: Are your SSDI Benefits at Risk?*



As you are probably already aware, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) has become a very politicized government program throughout the past few years. Last year, in October, the program faced a real crisis as SSDI beneficiaries were at risk of their benefits being cut by 20% by the end of 2016. Why? Simply because the government did not have enough funds to pay benefits. To prevent the cuts, President Obama signed into effect the [Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015](#); the Act suspended the debt limit and reallocated a slightly higher percentage of payroll taxes to fund Social Security Disability Insurance. The result is full benefits can be paid out through 2022.

What happens in 2022 then? For now, the SSDI trust fund still needs additional financing. Six years is a short time to make some big changes to such a large program that affects so many people. There are plans to make adjustments to the SSDI program's integrity and implement some pilot programs that will hopefully produce some positive results.

One major part of SSDI that needs revision is the incentive programs for those beneficiaries who want to get back to work. There are several barriers and risk factors that keeps SSDI recipients from rejoining the workforce or from even making an attempt to see if they are medically able to work or not.

The new law allows for program changes and pilots to explore ways to solve this problem among others. We just hope that the Social Security Administration fully tests these upcoming pilot programs well before 2022 so that by then, we'll know what works and what doesn't work and hopefully be closer

## *Do You Need A Patient Advocate?*

### Meet Our Friend Cindi Gatton!



Cindi Gatton

If you've ever traveled to a foreign country, it can feel pretty overwhelming. The language is different, the customs are different, and the currency is different. An experience with our healthcare system can feel pretty overwhelming in much the same way.

Some feel the foreign travel experience is easier with a guide, at least initially. Many feel the same way about our healthcare experiences. What if there was a pathfinder who could point out what's expected, could communicate effectively with the "locals", and help sort out what it costs? Enter the emerging professional field of patient advocacy.

The Patient Advocate Certification Board ([www.pacboard.org](http://www.pacboard.org)) is developing a national credential for private patient advocates. PAC

defines a patient advocate as a person who provides direct services to patients and their families who are navigating the complex healthcare continuum, seeking to empower and inform their autonomous choices.

As someone who spent her entire life in the healthcare system, first as a speech/language pathologist, later on the business side of health care, Cindi was called to this field when her only brother became ill. He had several specialists treating him. Navigating insurance and disability was daunting for him, like it is for many people. It seemed the right hand never knew what the left hand was doing. It became very frustrating. Improving his experience and amplifying his voice became important to Cindi and of huge value to him.

While there are people that have the title "patient advocate" in and throughout our health care system, private advocates work directly for their clients, not for a hospital, drug company, or insurance company. This means they represent only the patient's interest, not a third party, and this is what sets them apart.

In addition to more than 25 years' experience from various positions in the field on how to navigate more directly in and through our healthcare system, Cindi also completed a year long post graduate program in consumer patient advocacy at the University of Wisconsin before opening her practice. She is a mother of two young adult sons, is an avid walker and hiker, and devoted gardener.

You can find Cindi online at [www.pathfinderpatientadvocacy.com](http://www.pathfinderpatientadvocacy.com), email her at [Cindi@georgiapatientadvocate.com](mailto:Cindi@georgiapatientadvocate.com), or call the office on 404-687-6998.

## *Sara Khaki selected as a Rising Star by Georgia Super Lawyers:*

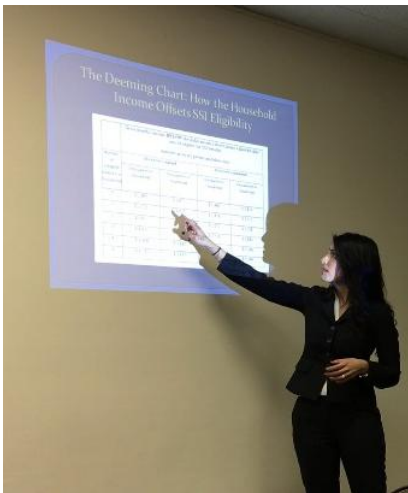


We are thrilled that our own Sara Khaki has been recognized as one of Georgia's best lawyers by Super Lawyers and Atlanta Magazine who have selected her as a 2016 Rising Star. Only 2.5% of all Georgia lawyers receive this prestigious award.

**Super Lawyers**  
RISING STARS

## *February's Workshop:*

### *Presenting on Child Supplemental Security at FOCUS*



We had the honor of being invited to speak to parents of children with special needs at FOCUS. FOCUS is a non-profit organization that "offers comfort, hope, and fun to families with children who are medically fragile or have significant developmental or physical disabilities through a variety of programs". Sara Khaki had the opportunity to educate parents on the tedious process of SSI. She and Holly Casey, our Intake Specialist, got to meet a lot of amazing people. This is our second time partnering with FOCUS and their awesome Parent-Support Coordinator, Elizabeth Hewell. We always enjoy the families we get to meet there. Learn more about FOCUS and their mission by clicking below.



## *Calendar of Events:*

**February 2016**

February 1st: In Court, Atlanta, GA

February 1st: In Court, Rome, GA  
February 2nd: In Court, Atlanta, GA  
February 4th: In Court, Covington, GA  
February 5th: In Court, Atlanta, GA  
February 9th: In Court, Atlanta, GA  
February 10th: In Court, Brunswick, GA  
February 11th: Sara & Holly present on Child SSI at FOCUS  
February 12th: Happy Birthday President Abraham Lincoln!  
February 14th: Happy Valentines Day!  
February 15th: President's Day  
February 17th: In Court, Vidalia, GA  
February 19th: In Court, Vidalia, GA  
February 23rd In Court, Atlanta, GA  
February 24th: In Court, Augusta, GA  
February 25th: In Court, Atlanta, GA



## Contact Us!

### The Khaki Law Firm

Main Office: 3510 Old Milton Parkway  
Alpharetta, GA 30005

By Appointment Only: Buckhead & Marietta

Local (678) 228-8688  
Toll Free 1 (866) 394-4925  
[TheKhakiLawFirm.com](http://TheKhakiLawFirm.com)

## Stay Connected



Sara G. Khaki, Esq.

"We help people get through  
the Social Security Disability process  
with personalized legal care."