

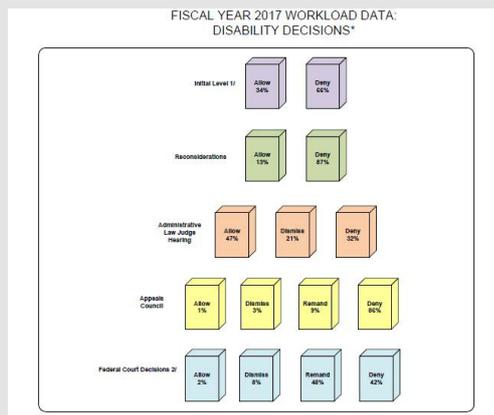
Social Security Approval Trends for 2017 : *From Initial Application to Appeals Council*

Each year, the Social Security Administration releases its Annual Performance Report to provide information about the past year performance and the future goals of the Administration. After reviewing the trends, we felt there were a few notable things our clients should know. The overall trend is that there seems to be a steady decrease in disability applications after a peak in 2010; less people are applying. This may be due to the fact that perhaps people are healthier now than they were 7 years ago.

In 2017, there were 2.4 million initial claims filed. This is a 7.4% decrease compared to 2016. Additionally, there were almost 600,000 reconsideration appeals filed; this is a 10.7% decrease since 2016. Lastly, there was a 13% decrease in Hearing appeals-only 620,164. With fewer applications and appeals to process, one would think we would see more approvals since the adjudicators (evaluators) have time to develop the claims properly and judges have fewer cases to hear. For the most part, this may actually be true, but it depends on the level at which the case is approved. The approval rates at both the initial and reconsideration levels for 2017 increased by one percentage point. We can attest to this as we've seen more of our clients at these levels get approved last year than in the past.

However, the dismissal rate at the hearing level increased by one percentage point as compared to 2016. The overall approval rate at the hearing level was 47% last year. This is still well below levels in past years with approval rates of over 60% in 2008 and 2009. At the Appeals Council level, only about 10% of claims were approved or remanded which is a decrease of two percent compared to 2016.

As a client, how can you help The Khaki Law Firm advocate for you in court and obtain that approval? The most important factor to increase your chances of a favorable outcome is stay consistent with your medical treatment. You have to be an advocate for yourself and your health! The next important step is to make sure you are keeping your paralegal at up to date with all your medical procedures and providers. When you work with us as a team, your chances for a favorable outcome increase tremendously!



Sara Khaki and Amanda Patterson had the opportunity this month to continue our tradition of visiting the families at FOCUS and present on Child's SSI. FOCUS is about providing love and support to children and families of children with significant development or physical disabilities. They offer support, education, and resources to families need assistance. We feel honored to be invited back each time to meet new families and provide what support we can during difficult times.



Health Tip of the Month: Spring is in the Air!

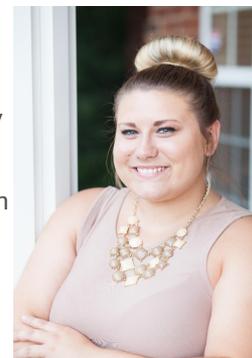
It officially became Spring on March 20th. We all know spring brings pollen here in Georgia, and it's pretty much unavoidable! It layers itself on the streets, lawns, cars, and it seeps into our homes like an unwelcome visitor. Although unavoidable, we can reduce the impact of pollen by following a few tips and still enjoy the outdoors.

- 1.) **Know the pollen count:** if it's really high, you may want to stay inside as much as possible.
- 2.) **Plan when you go outside:** Plants generally pollinate between 5 am and 9am, so waiting until later in the day to go for a run or take your kids to the park may be the best course of action.
- 3.) **Wash your hands regularly:** This will keep pollen from being transferred from your hands to your face or eyes which will reduce some of the symptoms. If you've spent much time outside, immediately change your clothes and/or take a shower to wash it away.
- 4.) **Wear a mask:** It may not be fashionable, but you will reduce the impact pollen will have on you.
- 5.) **Treat your pollen allergies:** If you don't want to go to the doctor, there are plenty of over the counter allergy pills that will help people with mild allergies. If you have severe reactions, go to your doctor for a prescription.



A Farewell to Amanda!

Our Intake Specialist Amanda Patterson is moving back to her home state of Ohio to be closer to her family, and we are all sad to see a member of our Khaki Law Firm family leave, but we know that Amanda will do amazing things no matter where she goes. She's grown so much personally and professionally over the past couple of years, and we're so proud of her. We were her first "adult" job out of college as she called it. She was a fish out of water at first, but she has such an amazing work ethic and a go get 'em attitude that she soon succeeded at her job and was asking for more opportunities to grow and learn. We were happy to oblige! Amanda, we wish you the best and have so much gratitude for all that you have done for our clients!



Calendar of Events: March 2018

March 1: In court; Gainesville, GA
 March 5: In court; Atlanta, GA
 In court; Gainesville, GA
 March 7: In court; Columbus, GA
 Happy Birthday Courtney!
 March 8: In court; Covington, GA
 March 13 : In court; Atlanta, GA
 March 14: In court; Atlanta, GA
 March 17: Happy St. Patrick's Day!
 March 20: In court; Atlanta, GA
 March 26: In court; Savannah, GA
 March 27 : In court; Albany, GA
 March 28: In court; Columbus, GA
 March 29: In court; Brunswick, GA
 March 30: In court; Atlanta, GA
 In court; Albany, GA



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