



Insurance, Social Security and Other Benefits

When receiving a diagnosis of early onset Alzheimer's disease, we know there can be challenges and financial obstacles when you are under 60 years of age. As you begin to assess your financial situation, there are several options to discuss with your estate/financial planning professional. In addition to insurance and benefits, this document also discusses Social Security Disability Income, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Disability Options

If you are employed at the time of your diagnosis, you can refer to your employee benefits handbook or check with the benefits/human resource specialist at your place of employment, to find out what benefits you are entitled to receive.

Insurance Policies

If you have private health insurance, contact your health insurance company to inquire about available benefits and coverage. If you will be applying for new insurance coverage, please be sure to find out how soon Alzheimer's disease expenses will be covered under the new insurance policy.

Social Security

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has added early onset/younger-onset Alzheimer's to the list of conditions under its Compassionate Allowance Initiative, giving those with the disease expedited access to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Social Security disability benefits (SSDI) are paid to individuals who have worked for enough years and have a condition that is so severe that they are not able to work any longer. Administered by the Social Security Administration, SSDI makes monthly payments to eligible disabled individuals and is a significant benefit for individuals with early-onset Alzheimer's disease. In addition to a monthly payment, it serves as entry to Medicare benefits for those under the age of 65. Family members (e.g., spouses and minor children) may also be eligible for benefits based on the applicant's work record.

Supplemental Security Income benefits (SSI) are paid each month to individuals who are aged, blind or disabled and have limited income and resources (assets). The "disability" criteria for SSI are the same as for SSDI benefits. Unlike SSDI, eligibility for SSI is not based on prior work experience. In addition, in most states, individuals who receive SSI are also automatically eligible for Medicaid (medical assistance) benefits.



The Compassionate Allowance Initiative finds that individuals with certain diseases/conditions eligible for Social Security disability (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits by the nature of the disease. While applicants still have to meet other SSDI criteria and/or SSI criteria, when it comes to the disability criterion, they are considered eligible by virtue of the disease and fast-tracked for a favorable decision about their eligibility for SSDI and SSI benefits.

Medicaid

Medicaid eligibility and benefits vary from state to state. Therefore, it is highly recommended that before you consider applying for Medicaid, you speak with an elder law attorney or estate planning specialist. Each state has very specific laws regarding giving away assets to family members, so you want to make sure you speak with an expert in this area so that you do not jeopardize any of your assets.

Veterans Benefits

If you have served in the armed forces, regardless of the branch or length of service, you may be eligible for veterans benefits that could help with your expenses. Click on the following link to determine eligibility and/or to contact your local Veterans Administration office: <http://www.va.gov/opa/persona/index.asp>