



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

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To: Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs)
Executive Directors
Children's Mental Health Directors
Behavioral Health Directors
North Texas Behavioral Health Authority (NTBHA)
Hospital Superintendents
Hospital Directors of Social Work
Hospital Directors of Reimbursement
Hospital Directors of Community Relations

From: Trina Ita, Director *(Signature)*
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Division, Program Services Section II

Peggy Perry, Director *(Signature)*
Kerry Raymond, Assistant Director *KR*
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Division, Hospital Section

Re: Social Security Administration (SSA) Prerelease Agreement Staged Implementation Strategy and Training

Purpose

The purpose of the SSA Prerelease Agreement is to identify and formalize procedures to facilitate timely processing of applications for entitlement to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security benefits for disabled and aged individuals in the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) state hospital (SH) system. The prerelease application procedures allow individuals currently residing in one of the state hospitals that require a new disability decision to file for benefits up to 90 days prior to their release, providing for a smoother transition back to the community.

SSA Staged Implementation Strategy

DSHS has developed a staged implementation strategy for the implementation of the SSA Prerelease Agreement toward the aim of ensuring the development of sustainable procedures.

In order to focus efforts on individuals that are anticipated to discharge within 90 days and that require a new disability decision (individuals who have not filed for benefits previously, or have resided in a state hospital for 12 months), DSHS has identified the following population to target in the first stage of implementation.

Stage One: Individuals on the 365 list with commitments expiring within 90 days

An Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and Provider

Training:

The SSA Prerelease Agreement requires a new process for DSHS. Training opportunities have been scheduled to assist state hospital and LMHA staff in understanding the agreement, their role, and pertinent information regarding SSI/SSDI applications.

- Webinar 1: Introduction to SSA Prerelease Agreement
 - Intended Audience: State hospital and LMHA staff
 - Date/Time: June, 24th 2015 2:30-4:00pm
 - Registration: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4708465399106981378>
- Webinar 2: SSI/SSDI application training
 - Date/Time: Two Options
 - July, 16th 2015: 10-11:30am
Registration: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7463240105453049858> ; or
 - July, 22nd 2015: 10-11:30am
Registration: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4886810583178599938>
- In-person training opportunities
 - Date/Time: TBD
 - Location: TBD

Responsibilities

State Hospital will designate a POC to notify the local SSA filed office of any pertinent changes, and respond to any SSA local filed office inquires. State hospital staff will initiate SSI applications for individuals eligible to apply for this entitlement.

SSA Local Field Offices will designate a POC for each state hospital participating in the SSA Pre-Release Agreement to provide assistance to state hospital staff to initiate and complete prerelease applications.

DSHS Central Office and SSA Regional Office will address any concerns and streamline communication when urgent or significant procedural issues cannot be resolved at the local level between SSA FO POCs and SH POCs.

LMHA will collaborate with state hospital staff to identify individuals, assist in discharge planning, and collect documents to assist state hospital staff during the prerelease application process within their existing responsibilities. If an individual is currently residing in the community, the LMHA is responsible for assisting the individual to apply for benefits as this SSA Prerelease Agreement is only applicable to individuals currently in the SH.

State Hospitals and Points of Contact

State Hospital	SH Point of Contact	Contact Email
Austin	Mary Ann Kwiatkowski	Mary.Kwiatkowski@dshs.state.tx.us
Big Spring	Robin Riha	Robin.Riha@dshs.state.tx.us

El Paso	Sonia Morales	Sonia.Morales@dshs.state.tx.us
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San Antonio	John Jeffers	John.Jeffers@dshs.state.tx.us
Terrell	William Plate	William.Plate@dshs.state.tx.us

For questions or further information regarding SSA Prerelease Agreement, please contact Joy Kearney at joy.kearney@dshs.state.tx.us or Kerry Raymond at kerry.raymond@dshs.state.tx.us.