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Happy Holidays!



We wish you a happy holiday season and a blessed new year. We are grateful for the opportunity to represent you and hope to continue to serve you in the upcoming year.

Seasons Greetings,

*Karl, Lindsay, Lori, Ashley,
Ashly, Amy and Missy*

Free transportation to medical appointments for Allegheny County residents...



Just a reminder for Allegheny County residents who receive Pennsylvania Medical Assistance... the MATP program is available to you. This is **FREE** transportation to non-emergency medical appointments, including physical health services, behavioral health appointments and drug and alcohol treatment.

The MATP program will provide transportation one of three ways:

- the shared-ride system,
- public transportation (free bus tickets) or
- an after-the-fact reimbursement of transportation costs for bus and private automobiles (not including jitneys) that are authorized by the program.

Did you Know...

The David L. Lawrence Convention Center in downtown Pittsburgh is the first certified green convention center in the United States and the largest certified green building in the world.

Pittsburgh hosted the first night-time World Series game back in 1971.

You can easily enroll by calling 1-888-547-6287 or visit the MATP office located at One Smithfield Street, 1st Floor, Downtown Pittsburgh.

This is a great program to help you get to your medical appointments. Use it!

(MATP does not provide emergency or ambulance service or transportation to sheltered workshops, daycare programs, mental health social rehabilitations programs, WIC programs, nutrition programs or VA Medical Centers.)

I have a claim pending at the Appeals Council, what happens now?

Of course our goal is to win 100% of the time, and we are successful the majority of the time, but there are occasions where an ALJ disagrees with our argument and issues an unfavorable decision. When we appeal these decisions we are arguing that the ALJ's decision is not based on "substantial evidence." This means that we must show serious errors in the ALJ's reasoning. An unfavorable decision will not be overturned by the

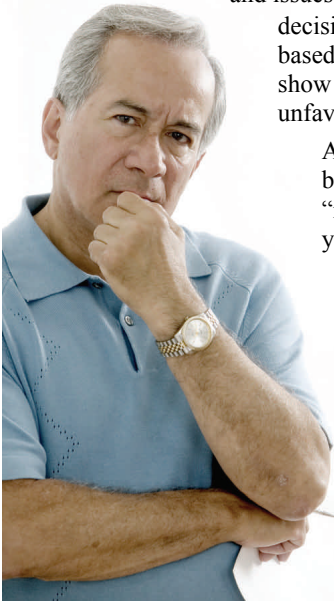
Appeals Council if the decision carefully explains the basis for finding you not disabled to the point that a "reasonable person" could reach the conclusion that you are not disabled. This again emphasizes the need

to treat consistently and follow your physician's advice. If you are not in treatment or only go to your appointments sporadically, then it is hard to argue that a "reasonable person" would not come to the same conclusion as the ALJ that you are not disabled because there is little to no evidence to contradict that conclusion.

An appeal at the Appeals Council level can take months to process because the office in Falls Church, VA is accepting *all* appeals of

unfavorable decision *nationwide*. So you can imagine the number of appeals pending at their office. Due to the long wait, we encourage you to file a new application once the appeal has been filed. If your appeal is remanded, meaning sent back to the ALJ for another hearing, and the hearing on your new application has not yet been held, Social Security will just combine your claims and your hearing will cover the time period concerning your first application through present day.

It is important to call us once you have made your new application so we can file the necessary paperwork on your behalf and answer any questions you may have.



Updated Hearing Delay

Downtown Pittsburgh, 16 months
Seven Fields, 16 months
Johnstown, 14 months
Morgantown, 14 months

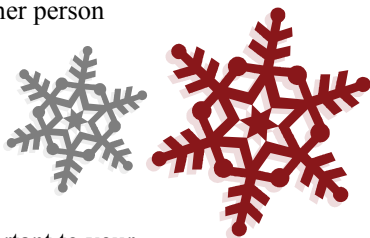
We try to keep you posted on how long the hearing offices are taking to schedule hearings. This time frame begins from the date you file your request for a hearing, not the date you filed your initial claim.

Currently the average delay in Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia are as follows: (Remember these are averages only, individual cases may take somewhat longer)

Join us in Welcoming Ashley

Last issue, we featured Lori. This issue we want to give you a chance to meet Ashley G., another person that most of you speak with regularly.

Ashley started working in our office in March 2007. She handles several areas in our office that are very important to your claim. As our Intake Specialist, she puts together the paperwork and sends it to you to hire our firm as your attorney. Many of you may



have met her during your initial meeting with our office. Once you return our forms, she opens your file here in our office and submits all the necessary paperwork to Social Security.

Additionally, Ashley files all appeals from the initial denial to filing a complaint in District Court.

Among these many tasks, she also answers your questions when you call.

If your address or phone number has changed, please call her to update your file.

In her spare time, Ashley enjoys photography.



Important Reminder: If your address or telephone number has changed, please contact us immediately with your new information.

In order to adequately represent you, we must be able to reach you by telephone or mail to discuss your case.

Need Help with your Heating Bill?

It's that time of year again, when the temperature drops and heating bills can become a real burden, especially when you're unable to work. Here is some general information on energy assistant programs in our area. For more specific information on eligibility and how to apply contact the program directly.

(We do not accept applications or have any additional information in our office. We are only providing general information that is available on the internet at www.dpw.state.pa.us and www.liheap.ncat.org to help you find a program that may be able to assist you.)

Pennsylvania's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a grant program that helps low income families pay their heating bills. Because it is a grant, it does not have to be repaid. There are two types of grants offered through this program: cash grants and crisis grants.

Cash grants help families pay their heating bills. The payment is sent directly to the utility company and fuel provided will be credited on your bill.

Crisis grants help families in emergency situations including broken heating equipment, fuel shortages or having utility service shut off that puts you in danger of being without heat. (For a crisis grant contact your local county assistance office.)

You can apply for LIHEAP online at www.compass.state.pa.us, call the Statewide LIHEAP Hotline at 1-866-857-7095 or pick up an application at your local county assistance office. (Refer to the chart above for income eligibility limits.)

Customer Assistant Programs, otherwise known as CAPs, are assistance programs available through your gas and electric utility company. These programs help customers by reducing your bill through a percentage of bill plan or a percentage of income payment plan. Utility payments are based upon your income and/or utility bills. Some programs include utility arrearage forgiveness; others provide flat rate discounts or bill credits. For information on applying for these programs call your local utility company's toll free number listed below.

Allegheny Power
1-800-207-1250
TDD 1-800-955-9445

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania
1-800-537-7431

Dominion Peoples
412-244-2626
or outside the Pittsburgh area:
1-800-764-0111
TDD 1-800-527-1333

Duquesne Light
1-888-393-7600

Equitable Gas of Pennsylvania
412-395-3050 - Allegheny County
1-800-654-6335 - Outside Allegheny Co.

Low-Income Energy Efficiency Programs (LIURP) address energy savings by promoting efficient use and conservation of electricity or gas. Depending on the features offered through your utility company's program you may be able to get help repairing or replacing a broken heating system, water heater or refrigerator or receive weatherization measures for your home including weather stripping, caulking or insulation. These measures can result in a decrease your monthly charges.

There are also charitable programs out there to help, but these are a last resort. Do not contact these programs unless you have exhausted all other avenues and have no where else to turn. These programs are dependent upon voluntary contributions and have limited resources. An example of a charitable program is "Lights On" offered by Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative. For information call 814-445-4106 or 1-800-443-4255. Also there is the Dollar Energy Fund, which is a nonprofit organization dependent on donations. Applications for this program must be made through a local community agency that is a partners with the program. For more information or to find a partner agency in your area check out www.dollarenergy.org.

We hope that this general information may help give you some avenues to explore if you are in need of energy assistance this winter.

Household Size	Income Limit
1	\$23,110
2	\$30,221
3	\$37,332
4	\$44,443
5	\$51,554
6	\$58,665
7	\$59,998
8	\$61,332
9	\$62,665
10	\$64,200
<i>Each Additional Person Add</i>	<i>\$5,400</i>



The Law Office of
Karl E. Osterhout LLC

Aggressive. Experienced. Personal.

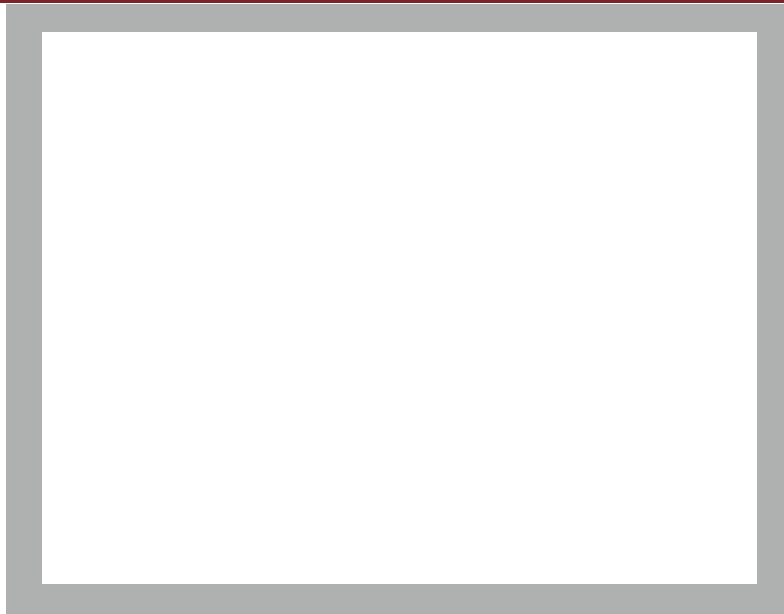
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Attorneys
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We Are Deeply Grateful For Referrals From Our Clients!

When a former client refers a new case to us that means they were satisfied with our work, with the way we treated them and with the outcome of their case. It doesn't get better than that!

Please consider recommending us to anyone you know who has applied for Social Security disability benefits. It is never too late to call us, (even if you have received a

denial from an ALJ!), because we handle claims at all levels of the process.

You can be assured that any person you refer to us will be treated with respect and kindness and that we will do everything we can to achieve a favorable outcome for them.



Getting *ALL* the Benefits.