



Office of the Inspector General

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Informational Report

Comparing the Social Security Administration's Disability Determination Services' Workload Statistics During the COVID-19 Pandemic to Prior Years

A-01-21-51038 | December 2021



Office of the Inspector General

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 1, 2021

Refer To: A-01-21-51038

To: Kilolo Kijakazi
Acting Commissioner

From: Gail S. Ennis 
Inspector General

Subject: Comparing the Social Security Administration's Disability Determination Services' Workload Statistics During the COVID-19 Pandemic to Prior Years

The attached final report presents the results of the Office of Audit's review. The objective was to summarize information about State disability determination services' workloads during the COVID-19 pandemic period of April 2020 to March 2021 and compare it to disability determination services' workloads in prior years.

If you wish to discuss the final report, please call me or have your staff contact Michelle L. Anderson, Assistant Inspector General for Audit.

Attachment

Comparing the Social Security Administration's Disability Determination Services' Workload Statistics During the COVID-19 Pandemic to Prior Years

A-01-21-51038



December 2021

Office of Audit Report Summary

Objective

To summarize information about State disability determination services' (DDS) workloads during the COVID-19 pandemic period of April 2020 to March 2021 and compare it to DDS workloads in prior years.

Background

Once a claimant files a disability application, a Social Security Administration (SSA) field office employee determines whether the individual meets the non-disability criteria for benefits. If the claimant meets these requirements, the employee forwards the claim to the DDS in the State that has jurisdiction for the disability determination.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. On March 17, 2020, SSA closed its offices to the public. State DDSs experienced periodic closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, SSA authorized DDSs to allow their employees to continue processing disability claims from home.

From SSA's Office of Disability Determinations' Management Information dashboard, we obtained State DDS workload information for initial claims, reconsiderations, and continuing disability reviews (CDR).

Conclusions

Although the DDSs experienced some increases/decreases in their workload categories from year to year for the period April 2016 through March 2021, the largest year-to-year changes occurred from the COVID-19 period of April 2020 to March 2021 compared to the prior-year period (April 2019 to March 2020). DDSs received 15.9 percent fewer initial claims during the COVID-19 period compared to the prior-year period. Additionally, SSA sent 40.2 percent fewer CDRs to the DDS during the COVID-19 period compared to the prior-year period.

Despite the decrease in initial claims, DDS processing times increased during the COVID-19 period, which indicates claimants waited longer for DDSs to make medical determinations. Furthermore, even though receipts decreased for initial claims, reconsiderations, and CDRs, the pending workloads for these groups increased—which indicates the DDSs could not keep pace with workloads received.

Finally, we noted that DDSs significantly decreased the use of consultative examinations; however, allowance/continuance rates remained relatively the same when comparing the COVID-19 period to the prior-year period.

We plan to conduct an additional review to determine why some DDS workload categories significantly changed in the COVID-19 period compared to prior-year period.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Objective.....	1
Background.....	1
Methodology	2
Disability Determination Services' Workload Categories	3
Results of Review	4
Disability Determination Services' Workloads – Initial Claims	4
Disability Determination Services' Workloads – Reconsiderations.....	7
Disability Determination Services' Workloads – Continuing Disability Reviews.....	8
Conclusion	10
Agency Comments.....	10
Appendix A – The Social Security Administration's Process for Evaluating Disability.....	A-1
Appendix B – Scope and Methodology	B-1
Appendix C – Summary of Disability Determination Services' Workloads	C-1
Appendix D – Disability Determination Services' Workloads By Region	D-1
Appendix E – Staffing at the Disability Determination Services	E-1
Appendix F – Agency Comments.....	F-1

ABBREVIATIONS

CDR	Continuing Disability Review
CE	Consultative Examination
C.F.R.	Code of Federal Regulations
DDS	Disability Determination Services
EST	Extended Service Team
FY	Fiscal Year
MER	Medical Evidence of Record
MI	Management Information
POMS	Program Operations Manual System
SSA	Social Security Administration
U.S.C.	United States Code

OBJECTIVE

Our objective was to summarize information about State disability determination services' (DDS) workloads during the COVID-19 pandemic period of April 2020 to March 2021 and compare it to DDS workloads in prior years.

BACKGROUND

The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income payments to eligible individuals.

- The Disability Insurance program provides monthly benefits to insured workers and their families if the worker becomes disabled.¹
- Supplemental Security Income is a means-tested program that provides a minimum level of income to financially needy individuals who are aged, blind, or disabled.²

An individual is considered disabled under SSA's regulations if he/she cannot engage in substantial gainful activity³ because of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment that can be expected to result in death or has lasted, or can be expected to last, for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.⁴ A claimant is required to prove his/her disability by providing medical and other evidence; however, SSA is responsible for making every reasonable effort to help the claimant get medical reports from the claimant's medical sources.⁵ (Medical evidence of record [MER] is SSA's term for medical records related to disability claims.) SSA uses a 5-Step sequential evaluation process to determine whether a claimant is disabled⁶ (see Appendix A for additional information).

Once a claimant files a disability application, staff at an SSA field office determines whether the individual meets the non-disability criteria for benefits, such as age and work credits. If the claimant meets these requirements, the field office forwards the claim to the DDS in the State that has jurisdiction for the disability determination. DDSs are in each of the 50 States plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

If a claimant disagrees with the Agency's initial disability determination, he/she can file an appeal within 60 days of the date of notice of the determination. In most cases, there are four

¹ 42 U.S.C. § 423.

² 42 U.S.C. § 1381a.

³ Substantial gainful activity is the performance of significant physical and/or mental activities in work for pay or profit or in work of a type generally performed for pay or profit. 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.1572 and 416.972; SSA, *POMS*, DI 10501.001 (January 5, 2007). In 2021, employees' countable earnings indicate substantial gainful activity and countable income of the self-employed is substantial if the amount averages more than \$1,310 per month for non-blind individuals or \$2,190 for blind individuals. SSA, *POMS*, DI 10501.015 (December 31, 2020).

⁴ 42 U.S.C. §§ 423(d)(1)(A) and 1382c(a)(3)(A).

⁵ 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.1512(b)(1) and 416.912(b)(1).

⁶ 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.1520(a)(4) and 416.920(a)(4).

levels of appeal: (1) reconsideration by the DDS,⁷ (2) hearing by an administrative law judge, (3) review by the Appeals Council, and (4) Federal Court review.⁸

Once individuals begin receiving disability benefits, the Agency is required to periodically perform a continuing disability review (CDR) to determine whether they remain medically eligible for the Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income program.⁹ Medical development of CDR cases is the responsibility of the DDS because they are equipped to obtain specific medical information and can pinpoint the development of clinical and laboratory evidence in light of the information already in a file.¹⁰ SSA discontinues benefits when a medical CDR reveals an individual has medically improved and no longer meets SSA's requirements for disability benefits, referred to as a cessation determination.¹¹

Approximately 90 percent of the DDS workload consists of initial claims, reconsiderations, and CDRs.¹² SSA's Office of Disability Determinations maintains a Management Information dashboard with reports that include DDS workload, staffing, and performance data as well as other quantifiable measurements that support the disability program's operation.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. On March 17, 2020, SSA closed its offices to the public. State DDSs experienced periodic closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, SSA authorized DDSs to allow its employees to work from home to continue processing disability claims.

Methodology

We summarized and compared DDS management information for the COVID-19 period of April 2020 to March 2021 (week ended April 3, 2020 to March 26, 2021) and the following prior 4-year periods:

- April 2019 to March 2020 (week ended April 5, 2019 to March 27, 2020),
- April 2018 to March 2019 (week ended April 6, 2018 to March 29, 2019),
- April 2017 to March 2018 (week ended April 7, 2017 to March 30, 2018), and
- April 2016 to March 2017 (week ended April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017).

⁷ In 1999, SSA eliminated the reconsideration level in Alabama, Alaska, California, Colorado, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, and Pennsylvania. In 2019, SSA began reinstating the reconsideration level in those States and, as of March 2020, completed reinstating the reconsideration level of appeal.

⁸ Under sections 205(g) and 1631(c)(3) of the *Social Security Act*, a claimant has the right to file a civil action requesting judicial review after any final decision of the Commissioner of Social Security made after a hearing, see SSA, *HALLEX*, vol. I, ch. I-4-1, sec. I-4-1-2 (June 20, 2016).

⁹ The frequency of medical CDRs depends on SSA's assessment of the likelihood of a disability beneficiary's medical improvement, 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.1590(d) and 416.990(d).

¹⁰ SSA, *POMS*, DI 28001.005, B.2 (May 18, 2015). In addition, SSA processes CDR mailers. A CDR mailer is a questionnaire SSA mails to disabled claimants who have a low likelihood of medical improvement. Based on the claimant's responses to the mailer, SSA may initiate a full medical CDR.

¹¹ SSA, *POMS*, DI 28001.001, E. (May 15, 2015).

¹² We did not obtain DDS workload category information for Office of Hearing Operations, prehearing, disability hearing unit, and assistance requests. Additionally, we did not include Federal DDS workload information.

See Appendix B for our scope and methodology.

Disability Determination Services' Workload Categories

Below are descriptions of the DDS workload categories we summarized for initial claims, reconsiderations, and CDRs.

- **Receipts** – Applications of claimants applying or re-applying for disability benefits. (Applicants may reapply because their prior disability claims have been denied.) Reconsideration level receipts are the applications of claimants denied at the initial level who appealed their initial level denial. CDR receipts are the number of CDRs received for disability beneficiaries who are being re-assessed to determine whether their disability will continue.
- **Clearances** – The number of receipts the DDS completes.
- **Determinations** – The DDS determination of a claim, which is either an allowance or denial for initial claims and reconsiderations or a continuance or cessation for CDRs.
- **No Determinations** – DDS staff closes a claim with no determination when they cannot make a medical determination, have done substantive work on the claim, and do not expect to receive the claim back from SSA.
- **Allowances or Continuances** – An allowance is a determination by the DDS that the claimant is eligible for disability benefits at the initial or reconsideration level. A continuance is a determination by the DDS that the CDR resulted in the claimant remaining eligible to receive disability benefits.
- **Allowance or Continuance Rates** – The number of allowances or continuances divided by the number of determinations.
- **Denials or Cessations** – A denial is a determination by the DDS that the claimant is not eligible to receive disability benefits at the initial or reconsideration levels. A cessation is a determination by the DDS that the CDR resulted in the claimant no longer being eligible to receive disability benefits.
- **Denial or Cessation Rates** – The number of denials or cessations divided by the number of determinations.
- **Consultative Examinations (CE)** – A physical or mental examination or test purchased from a medical source at SSA's request and expense to provide evidence for a claimant's disability or blindness claim.¹³ SSA uses the Disability Operational Data Store as its management information source, which has a limitation of only counting one CE per case; therefore, the CE count represents the number of cases with at least one CE.
- **CE Rates** – The number of claims with a CE divided by the number of clearances.

¹³ SSA, POMS, DI 22510.001, A.1 (January 6, 2020).

- **MER** – Medical evidence SSA obtains from all sources identified by the claimant or discovered during development of the disability claim. Sources include those who have treated or evaluated the claimant for the alleged or documented impairment(s).¹⁴ SSA uses the Disability Operational Data Store as its management information source, which has a limitation of only counting one MER per case; therefore, the MER count represents the number of cases with at least one MER.
- **MER Rates** – The number of claims with an MER divided by the number of clearances.
- **Pending** – The number of receipts the DDS has not completed. The pending claims are counted as a specific point in time, not yearly, so we obtained the pending claim totals as of the end of March for each year from 2017 through 2021.
- **Average Processing Time** – The time it takes the DDS to process a claim. This is measured in days. We could not obtain the average processing time for the time frames we were tracking because DDS average processing time is only captured by Fiscal Year (FY), starting in October. Therefore, we obtained the average processing time for 6-month periods (October through March) for FYs 2017 to 2021.

RESULTS OF REVIEW

Although the DDSs experienced some increases/decreases in their workload categories from year to year for the period April 2016 through March 2021, the largest year-to-year changes occurred from the COVID-19 period of April 2020 to March 2021 compared to the prior-year period (April 2019 to March 2020). For a summary of the COVID-19 period to the prior 4-year periods, see Appendix C; for a summary by each region, see Appendix D; and for a summary of DDS staffing, see Appendix E.

The DDSs received fewer initial claims, reconsiderations, and CDRs when we compared the COVID-19 period to the prior-year period, yet processing times increased—indicating claimants waited longer for DDSs to make medical determinations. Furthermore, the pending workloads for initial claims, reconsiderations, and CDRs increased—indicating the DDSs were not able to keep pace with workloads received.

Finally, even though the DDSs significantly decreased the use of consultative examinations during the COVID-19 period, allowance/continuance rates remained relatively the same when compared to the prior-year period.

Disability Determination Services' Workloads – Initial Claims

As seen in Table 1, DDSs received 15.9 percent fewer initial claims during the COVID-19 period compared to the prior-year period, and there were similar decreases for most initial claims categories. The largest decrease was 27.2 percent related to CEs. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, SSA suspended and canceled all non-virtual CEs on March 17, 2020. On May 29, 2020, SSA issued guidance on resuming in-person CEs but left it up to each DDS to determine and manage its reinstatement of CEs.

¹⁴ SSA, *POMS*, DI 22505.006, A.1 (March 15, 2017).

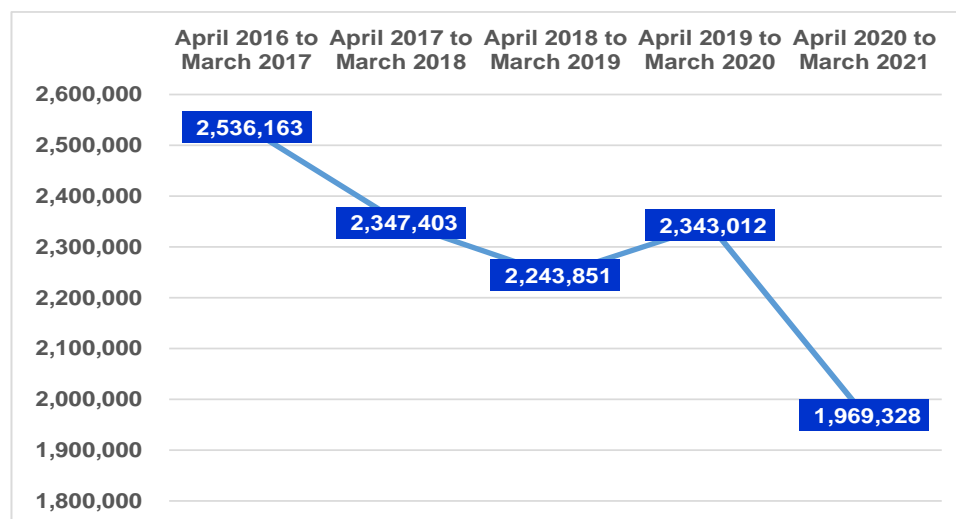
The average processing time for an initial claim increased to 139.4 days for the period October 2020 through March 2021 (6 months of the COVID-19 period) compared to 95.5 days for the period October 2019 to March 2020, an increase of 43.9 days.

Table 1: DDS Workload Summary – Initial Claims

Category	April 2020 to March 2021 (COVID Year)	April 2019 to March 2020 (Prior Year)	Percent Change from Prior Year to COVID-19 Year
Receipts	1,969,328	2,343,012	-15.9%
Clearances	1,925,239	2,235,433	-13.9%
Determinations	1,867,114	2,172,843	-14.1%
No Determinations	58,094	62,561	-7.1%
Allowances	707,486	827,047	-14.5%
Allowance Rates	37.9%	38.1%	-0.5%
Denials	1,159,628	1,345,796	-13.8%
Denial Rates	62.1%	61.9%	0.3%
CE	624,711	858,611	-27.2%
CE Rates	32.4%	38.4%	-15.6%
MER	1,613,922	1,857,788	-13.1%
MER Rates	83.8%	83.1%	0.8%
Pending (as of March)	661,010	634,885	4.1%
Average Processing Time (October through March)	139.4	95.5	46.0%

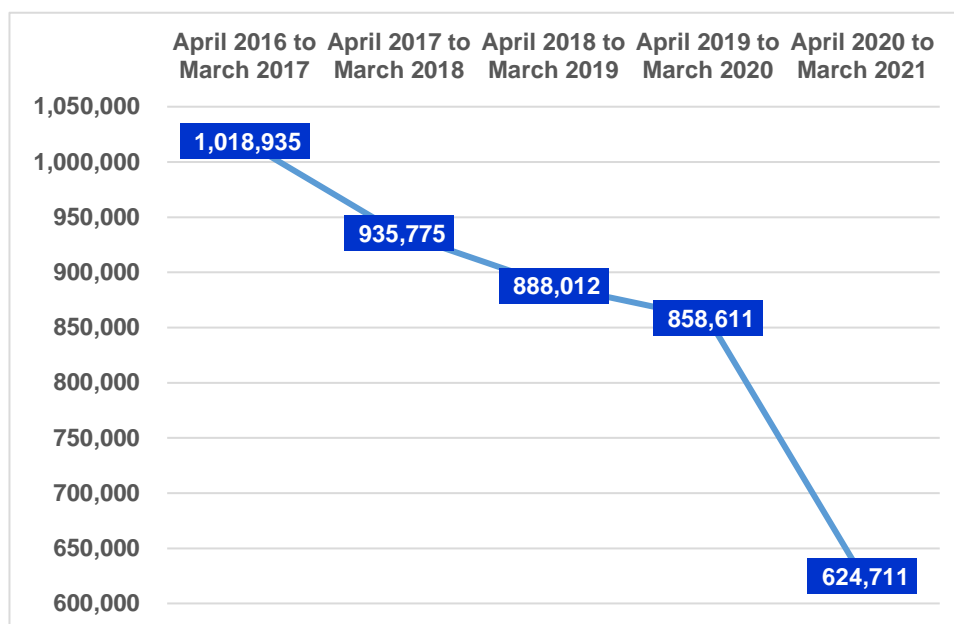
Figure 1 shows the increases and decreases in the number of initial claim receipts from April 2016 through March 2021; and the largest decrease occurred between the COVID-19 period and the year before the start of the pandemic.

Figure 1: Receipts



As seen in Figure 2, the largest decrease for initial claim CEs occurred between COVID-19 period and the year before the pandemic.

Figure 2: Consultative Examinations



As seen in Table 2, the largest percentage change for initial claims receipts was from September to October 2020 as receipts went from 143,329 to 200,063, an increase of 56,734, or 39.6 percent. The largest percentage change for initial claims clearances was from June to July 2020 as clearances went from 115,907 to 162,439, an increase of 46,532, or 40.1 percent.

Table 2: Monthly Summary of the COVID-19 Pandemic Period – Initial Claims

Month and Year	Number of Receipts	Change from Prior Month	Number of Clearances	Change from Prior Month
April 2020	180,280	3.9% ¹⁵	146,083	-1.6% ¹⁶
May 2020	178,804	-0.8%	149,886	2.6%
June 2020	152,955	-14.5%	115,907	-22.7%
July 2020	186,282	21.8%	162,439	40.1%
August 2020	158,182	-15.1%	147,493	-9.2%
September 2020	143,329	-9.4%	195,789	32.7%
October 2020	200,063	39.6%	228,665	16.8%
November 2020	142,097	-29.0%	146,456	-36.0%
December 2020	145,859	2.6%	149,907	2.4%
January 2021	171,809	17.8%	181,402	21.0%
February 2021	154,258	-10.2%	150,392	-17.1%
March 2021	155,410	0.7%	150,820	0.3%
Total DDS	1,969,328		1,925,239	

¹⁵ The number of initial claims receipts for March 2020 was 173,514.

¹⁶ The number of clearances for March 2020 was 148,435.

Disability Determination Services' Workloads – Reconsiderations

As seen in Table 3, reconsideration receipts in the COVID-19 period decreased by 9.8 percent from the prior-year period, and there were similar decreases for most reconsideration categories. The largest decrease was 15.2 percent relating to CEs when comparing the COVID-19 period to the prior-year period.

The average processing time for a reconsideration increased to 111.5 days for the period October 2020 through March 2021 (6 months of the COVID-19 period) as compared to 88.6 days for the period October 2019 to March 2020, an increase of 22.9 days.

Table 3: DDS Workload Summary – Reconsiderations

Category	April 2020 to March 2021 (COVID Year)	April 2019 to March 2020 (Prior Year)	Change from Prior Year to COVID-19 Year
Receipts	517,080	573,384	-9.8%
Clearances	487,198	518,112	-6.0%
Determinations	476,480	506,718	-6.0%
No Determinations	10,717	11,391	-5.9%
Allowances	60,556	68,899	-12.1%
Allowance Rates	12.7%	13.6%	-6.6%
Denials	415,924	437,819	-5.0%
Denial Rates	87.3%	86.4%	1.0%
CE	65,152	76,856	-15.2%
CE Rates	13.4%	14.8%	-9.5%
MER	348,083	364,362	-4.5%
MER Rates	71.4%	70.3%	1.6%
Pending (as of March)	180,086	154,852	16.3%
Average Processing Time (October through March)	111.5	88.6	25.8%

As seen in Table 4, the largest percentage change for reconsideration receipts took place from September to October 2020 as receipts went from 34,069 to 58,616, an increase of 24,547 or 72.1 percent. The largest percentage change for reconsideration clearances was from October to November 2020 as clearances went from 47,998 to 31,775, a decrease of 16,223 or 33.8 percent.

Table 4: Monthly Summary of the COVID-19 Pandemic Period – Reconsiderations

Month and Year	Number of Receipts	Change from Prior Month	Number of Clearances	Change from Prior Month
April 2020	41,279	-10.3% ¹⁷	42,006	4.3% ¹⁸
May 2020	42,636	3.3%	47,350	12.7%
June 2020	34,474	-19.1%	36,174	-23.6%
July 2020	36,361	5.5%	46,256	27.9%
August 2020	32,212	-11.4%	35,829	-22.5%
September 2020	34,069	5.8%	41,861	16.8%
October 2020	58,616	72.1%	47,998	14.7%
November 2020	45,417	-22.5%	31,775	-33.8%
December 2020	45,625	0.5%	34,400	8.3%
January 2021	54,204	18.8%	43,621	26.8%
February 2021	46,974	-13.3%	38,941	-10.7%
March 2021	45,213	-3.7%	40,987	5.3%
Total DDS	517,080		487,198	

Disability Determination Services' Workloads – Continuing Disability Reviews

When we compared the COVID-19 period to the prior-year period, we found most DDS workload categories for CDRs decreased. As seen in Table 5, CEs had the largest decrease at 48.5 percent, but receipts, clearances, determinations, continuances, cessations, and MERs had decreases over 40.0 percent.¹⁹

¹⁷ The number of reconsideration receipts for March 2020 was 46,001.

¹⁸ The number of reconsideration clearances for March 2020 was 40,259.

¹⁹ We did not obtain average processing time for CDRs because, according to SSA, the information is unofficial and intended for internal use only.

Table 5: DDS Workload Summary – CDRs

Category	April 2020 to March 2021 (COVID Year)	April 2019 to March 2020 (Prior Year)	Change from Prior Year to COVID-19 Year
Receipts	428,329	715,925	-40.2%
Clearances	397,127	697,486	-43.1%
Determinations	380,330	674,426	-43.6%
No Determinations	16,797	23,058	-27.2%
Continuances	302,046	537,945	-43.9%
Continuance Rates	79.4%	79.8%	-0.5%
Cessations	78,284	136,481	-42.6%
Cessation Rates	20.6%	20.2%	2.0%
CE	128,751	250,244	-48.5%
CE Rates	32.4%	35.9%	-9.7%
MER	312,601	531,040	-41.1%
MER Rates	78.7%	76.1%	3.4%
Pending (as of March)	237,067	216,053	9.7%

As seen in Table 6, the largest percentage change for CDR receipts took place from June to July 2020 as receipts went from 6,492 to 43,204, an increase of 36,712, or 565.5 percent. The largest percentage change for CDR clearances took place from April to May 2020 as clearances went from 6,642 to 32,053, an increase of 25,411, or 382.6 percent.

Table 6: Monthly Summary of the COVID-19 Pandemic Period – CDRs

Month and Year	Number of Receipts	Change from Prior Month	Number of Clearances	Change from Prior Month
April 2020	5,168	-88.6% ²⁰	6,642	-85.8% ²¹
May 2020	2,252	-56.4%	32,053	382.6%
June 2020	6,492	188.3%	15,274	-52.3%
July 2020	43,204	565.5%	19,239	26.0%
August 2020	32,973	-23.7%	19,729	2.5%
September 2020	32,474	-1.5%	38,751	96.4%
October 2020	49,046	51.0%	45,949	18.6%
November 2020	40,211	-18.0%	36,017	-21.6%
December 2020	47,200	17.4%	40,674	12.9%
January 2021	59,499	26.1%	50,499	24.2%
February 2021	56,465	-5.1%	44,367	-12.1%
March 2021	53,345	-5.5%	47,933	8.0%
Total DDS	428,329		397,127	

²⁰ The number of CDR receipts in March 2020 was 45,478.

²¹ The number of CDR clearances in March 2020 was 46,779.

CONCLUSION

We plan to conduct a more comprehensive review to determine why some DDS workloads changed significantly during the pandemic.

AGENCY COMMENTS

SSA did not have any comments on the report, see Appendix F.



Michelle L. Anderson
Assistant Inspector General for Audit

APPENDICES

Appendix A – THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION’S PROCESS FOR EVALUATING DISABILITY

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has a 5-Step sequential process for evaluating disability for adults. The process generally follows the definition of disability in the *Social Security Act* and regulations (Figure A–1).¹ An individual is considered disabled under SSA’s regulations if he/she cannot engage in substantial gainful activity² because of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment that can be expected to result in death or has lasted, or can be expected to last, for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.³

At Step 1, SSA considers whether the claimant is still performing substantial gainful activity. If the claimant is not performing substantial gainful activity, the claim is sent for a medical determination of disability. When the claim is initially developed, the adjudicator concurrently requests all the evidence needed for consideration at Steps 2 through 5 of the sequential evaluation process.⁴

At Step 2, SSA determines whether the claimant has a medically determinable impairment and whether it is severe.⁵ If a claimant has a medically determinable severe impairment, the Agency proceeds to Step 3 of the evaluation process and considers the Listings of Impairments. If the severity of the impairment meets or medically equals a specific Listing, the individual is considered disabled.

¹ SSA uses a different standard to evaluate disability for Supplemental Security Income claimants under age 18. 20 C.F.R. § 416.924.

² Substantial gainful activity is the performance of significant physical and/or mental activities in work for pay or profit or in work of a type generally performed for pay or profit. 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.1572 and 416.972. As of 2021, “countable earnings” of employees indicate substantial gainful activity and “countable income” of the self-employed is “substantial” if the amount averages more than \$1,310 per month for non-blind individuals or \$2,190 for blind individuals. SSA, *POMS*, DI 10501.015 (December 31, 2020).

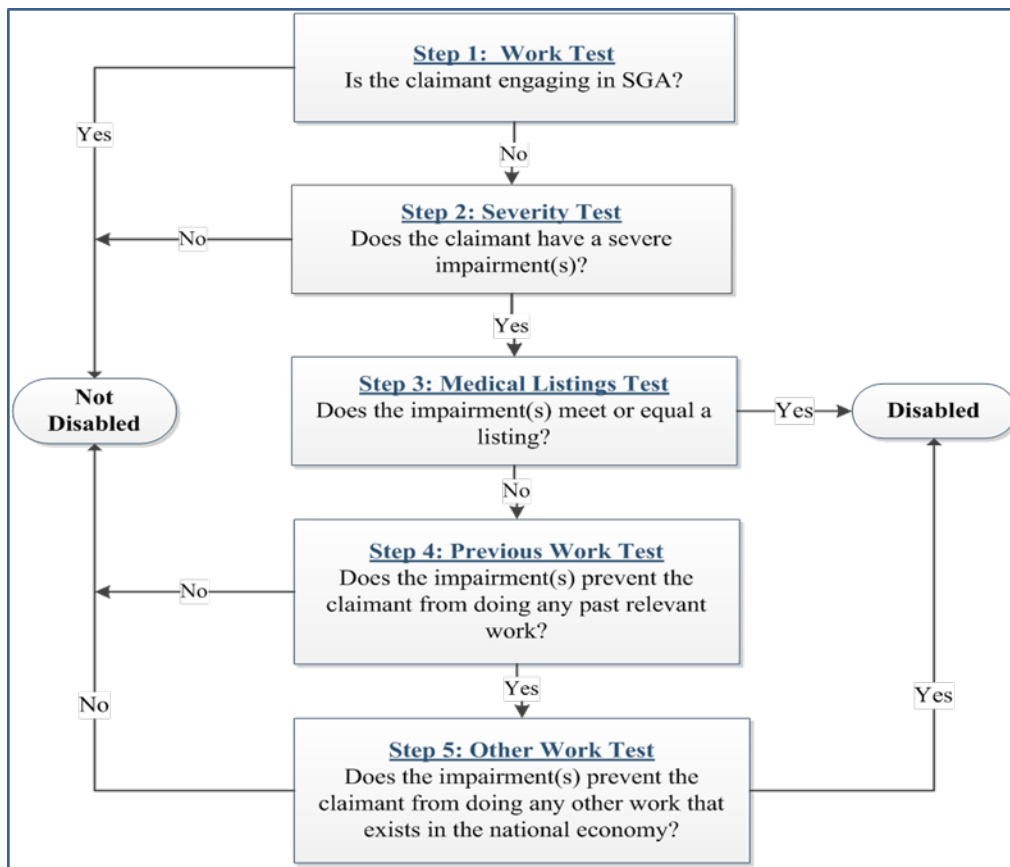
³ 42 U.S.C. §§ 423(d)(1)(A) and 1382c(a)(3)(A).

⁴ If the claimant disagrees with the Agency’s initial disability determination, he/she can appeal within 60 days of the date of notice of the determination. The four levels of review are (1) reconsideration by the disability determination services, (2) hearing by an administrative law judge, (3) review by the Appeals Council, and (4) review by the Federal courts. 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.900(a) and 416.1400(a), SSA, *POMS*, DI 12005.000 (January 15, 2020), DI 12010.000 (April 11, 2018), DI 12020.000 (September 20, 2011), and SI 04005.010 (September 9, 2011).

⁵ 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.1521 and 416.921. An impairment or combination of impairments is not severe if it does not significantly limit an individual’s physical or mental ability to do basic work activities, see 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.1522(a), and 416.922(a). Also see 20 C.F.R. §416.924(c).

If the individual's impairment does not meet or medically equal a Listing, the Agency moves to Steps 4 and 5. At Step 4, the Agency determines whether the claimant can perform past relevant work, considering his/her residual functional capacity⁶ and the physical and mental demands of the work he/she did. If the claimant can perform past relevant work, the claim is denied. If the claimant cannot perform past relevant work, at Step 5, the Agency determines whether the claimant can perform any other work, considering his/her residual functional capacity, age, education, and past work experience. If the claimant cannot perform any other work, SSA considers him/her disabled.⁷

Figure A–1: SSA's 5-Step Sequential Evaluation for Determining Disability for Adults



⁶ 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.1545(a)(1) and 416.945(a)(1). An individual's impairment(s), and any related symptoms, such as pain, may cause physical and mental limitations that affect what he/she can do in a work setting. The residual functional capacity is the most the individual can still do despite these limitations. SSA assesses the residual functional capacity based on all relevant evidence in the case record.

⁷ SSA has another sequential process for evaluating whether a disabled beneficiary's disability continues, which includes a step for considering the Listings. 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.1594(f) and 416.994(b)(5).

Appendix B – SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

To accomplish our objective, we:

- Reviewed applicable sections of the *Social Security Act* and Social Security Administration's (SSA) regulations, rules, policies, and procedures.
- Obtained disability determination services (DDS) workload information for initial claims, reconsiderations, and continuing disability reviews (CDR) from SSA's Office of Disability Determinations Management Information (MI) dashboard.¹
- Calculated the time frames we wanted to summarize (April to March), from the workload information we obtained from the MI dashboard.² The time frames we calculated to summarize were as follows.
 - April 2020 to March 2021 (COVID-19 period); this period was Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 week 27 (April 3, 2020) to FY 2021 week 26 (March 26, 2021).
 - April 2019 to March 2020; this period was FY 2019 week 27 (April 5, 2019) to FY 2020 week 26 (March 27, 2020).
 - April 2018 to March 2019; this period was FY 2018 week 27 (April 6, 2018) to FY 2019 week 26 (March 29, 2019).
 - April 2017 to March 2018; this period was FY 2017 week 27 (April 7, 2017) to FY 2018 week 26 (March 30, 2018).
 - April 2016 to March 2017; this period was FY 2016 week 27 (April 1, 2016) to FY 2017 week 26 (March 31, 2017).
- Summarized the State DDS workload³ information for initial claims, reconsiderations, and CDRs for the following categories
 - receipts, clearances, determinations, and no determinations;
 - allowances, allowance rates, denials, and denial rates;⁴
 - continuances, continuance rate, cessations, and cessation rates;⁵ and
 - consultative examinations, consultative examination rates, medical evidence of record, and medical evidence of record rates.

¹ We did not test the reliability of the data since we did not conduct this review under generally accepted government auditing standards.

² We could not obtain information from SSA's Office of Disability Determinations' MI dashboard for April to March; therefore, we calculated our specific time frames to summarize using the information we obtained.

³ We did not include the Federal DDS workload information for the time frames we summarized.

⁴ These categories only apply to initial claims and reconsiderations.

⁵ These categories apply only to CDRs.

- Summarized the number of pending initial claims, reconsiderations, and CDRs as of the end of March for years 2017 through 2021.⁶
- Summarized the average processing times for initial claims and reconsiderations⁷ for the 6-month period October through March for FYs 2017 through 2021.⁸
- Summarized the monthly workloads for initial claims, reconsiderations, and CDRs during the COVID-19 period pertaining to receipts and clearances.
- Summarized total DDS staffing as of the end of March for years 2017 through 2021.
- Contacted SSA and received responses from the Agency on questions we had concerning DDS workload information.

⁶ The DDS count for pending is as a specific point in time, so we obtained the pending counts as of the end of March for each year.

⁷ We did not obtain average processing time for CDRs because, according to SSA, the information is unofficial and intended for internal use only.

⁸ We could not obtain the average processing time for the time frames we were tracking because DDS average processing time is only captured by FY, starting in October.

Appendix C –SUMMARY OF DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES' WORKLOADS

Table C–1 through Table C–6 summarize the disability determination services' (DDS) workload information by initial claims, reconsiderations, and continuing disability reviews (CDR) for the COVID-19 period of April 2020 to March 2021 to the prior 4-year periods. For the tables that show the percentage changes from year to year, we did not calculate the percentage change from the prior year to April 2016 to March 2017 because we did not obtain DDS workload information for the period of April 2015 to March 2016.

Table C–1: DDS Workload Summary – Initial Claims

Category	April 2020 to March 2021	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Receipts	1,969,328	2,343,012	2,243,851	2,347,403	2,536,163
Clearances	1,925,239	2,235,433	2,238,510	2,370,881	2,533,399
Determinations	1,867,114	2,172,843	2,177,099	2,308,281	2,464,187
No Determinations	58,094	62,561	61,388	62,563	69,157
Allowances	707,486	827,047	778,087	796,959	834,904
Allowance Rates	37.9%	38.1%	35.7%	34.5%	33.9%
Denials	1,159,628	1,345,796	1,399,012	1,511,322	1,629,283
Denial Rates	62.1%	61.9%	64.3%	65.5%	66.1%
Consultative Examinations (CE)	624,711	858,611	888,012	935,775	1,018,935
CE Rates	32.4%	38.4%	39.7%	39.5%	40.2%
Medical Evidence of Record (MER)	1,613,922	1,857,788	1,894,965	2,037,267	2,200,202
MER Rates	83.8%	83.1%	84.7%	85.9%	86.8%
Pending (as of March)	661,010	634,885	532,021	533,185	561,815
Average Processing Time (October Through March)	139.4	95.5	92.4	86.0	86.2

**Table C–2: DDS Workload Summary – Initial Claims
(Percentage Change from Year to Year)**

Category	Percent Change from Prior-Year Period to:				
	April 2020 to March 2021	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Receipts	-15.9%	4.4%	-4.4%	-7.4%	
Clearances	-13.9%	-0.1%	-5.6%	-6.4%	
Determinations	-14.1%	-0.2%	-5.7%	-6.3%	
No Determinations	-7.1%	1.9%	-1.9%	-9.5%	
Allowances	-14.5%	6.3%	-2.4%	-4.5%	
Allowance Rates	-0.5%	6.7%	3.5%	1.8%	
Denials	-13.8%	-3.8%	-7.4%	-7.2%	
Denial Rates	0.3%	-3.7%	-1.8%	-0.9%	
CE	-27.2%	-3.3%	-5.1%	-8.2%	
CE Rates	-15.6%	-3.3%	0.5%	-1.7%	
MER	-13.1%	-2.0%	-7.0%	-7.4%	
MER Rates	0.8%	-1.9%	-1.4%	-1.0%	
Pending (as of March)	4.1%	19.3%	-0.2%	-5.1%	
Average Processing Time (October Through March)	46.0%	3.4%	7.4%	-0.2%	

Table C–3: DDS Workload Summary – Reconsiderations

Category	April 2020 to March 2021	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Receipts	517,080	573,384	505,631	524,295	536,907
Clearances	487,198	518,112	496,487	525,179	530,853
Determinations	476,480	506,718	485,272	514,718	521,073
No Determinations	10,717	11,391	11,210	10,460	9,774
Allowances	60,556	68,899	58,938	64,096	62,918
Allowance Rates	12.7%	13.6%	12.1%	12.5%	12.1%
Denials	415,924	437,819	426,334	450,622	458,155
Denial Rates	87.3%	86.4%	87.9%	87.5%	87.9%
CE	65,152	76,856	73,014	74,077	75,536
CE Rates	13.4%	14.8%	14.7%	14.1%	14.2%
MER	348,083	364,362	343,938	380,050	383,426
MER Rates	71.4%	70.3%	69.3%	72.4%	72.2%
Pending (as of March)	180,086	154,852	105,194	99,957	101,807
Average Processing Time (October Through March)	111.5	88.6	79.3	71.5	71.5

**Table C–4: DDS Workload Summary – Reconsiderations
(Percentage Change from Year to Year)**

Category	Percent Change from Prior-Year Period to:				
	April 2020 to March 2021	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Receipts	-9.8%	13.4%	-3.6%	-2.3%	
Clearances	-6.0%	4.4%	-5.5%	-1.1%	
Determinations	-6.0%	4.4%	-5.7%	-1.2%	
No Determinations	-5.9%	1.6%	7.2%	7.0%	
Allowances	-12.1%	16.9%	-8.0%	1.9%	
Allowance Rates	-6.6%	12.4%	-3.2%	3.3%	
Denials	-5.0%	2.7%	-5.4%	-1.6%	
Denial Rates	1.0%	-1.7%	0.5%	-0.5%	
CE	-15.2%	5.3%	-1.4%	-1.9%	
CE Rates	-9.5%	0.7%	4.3%	-0.7%	
MER	-4.5%	5.9%	-9.5%	-0.9%	
MER Rates	1.6%	1.4%	-4.3%	0.3%	
Pending (as of March)	16.3%	47.2%	5.2%	-1.8%	
Average Processing Time (October Through March)	25.8%	11.7%	10.9%	0.0%	

Table C–5: DDS Workload Summary – CDRs

Category	April 2020 to March 2021	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Receipts	428,329	715,925	892,299	869,682	947,613
Clearances	397,127	697,486	907,561	882,582	998,007
Determinations	380,330	674,426	878,639	851,112	964,083
No Determinations	16,797	23,058	28,922	31,467	33,924
Continuances	302,046	537,945	695,037	659,837	738,560
Continuance Rates	79.4%	79.8%	79.1%	77.5%	76.6%
Cessations	78,284	136,481	183,602	191,275	225,523
Cessation Rates	20.6%	20.2%	20.9%	22.5%	23.4%
CE	128,751	250,244	330,629	331,412	390,503
CE Rates	32.4%	35.9%	36.4%	37.6%	39.1%
MER	312,601	531,040	707,081	699,473	796,959
MER Rates	78.7%	76.1%	77.9%	79.3%	79.9%
Pending (as of March)	237,067	216,053	204,284	226,920	247,385

**Table C–6: DDS Workload Summary – CDRs
(Percentage Change from Year to Year)**

Category	Percent Change from Prior-Year Period to:				
	April 2020 to March 2021	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Receipts	-40.2%	-19.8%	2.6%	-8.2%	
Clearances	-43.1%	-23.1%	2.8%	-11.6%	
Determinations	-43.6%	-23.2%	3.2%	-11.7%	
No Determinations	-27.2%	-20.3%	-8.1%	-7.2%	
Continuances	-43.9%	-22.6%	5.3%	-10.7%	
Continuance Rates	-0.5%	0.9%	2.1%	1.2%	
Cessations	-42.6%	-25.7%	-4.0%	-15.2%	
Cessation Rates	2.0%	-3.3%	-7.1%	-3.8%	
CE	-48.5%	-24.3%	-0.2%	-15.1%	
CE Rates	-9.7%	-1.4%	-3.2%	-3.8%	
MER	-41.1%	-24.9%	1.1%	-12.2%	
MER Rates	3.4%	-2.3%	-1.8%	-0.8%	
Pending (as of March)	9.7%	5.8%	-10.0%	-8.3%	

Appendix D –DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES’ WORKLOADS BY REGION

The tables below represent the disability determination services’ (DDS) workloads by region at the initial claims, reconsiderations, and continuing disability review (CDR) levels.

Disability Determination Services’ Workload – Initial Claims

Table D–1 through Table D–14 show the DDS workload categories for initial claims summarized by region. The third column in each table represents the percentage change from the prior period to the COVID-19 period.

Table D–1: Receipts

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	80,722	-19.6%	100,417	97,414	100,166	106,006
New York	159,531	-13.6%	184,708	182,728	194,497	212,351
Philadelphia	202,951	-16.4%	242,639	228,912	255,728	255,186
Atlanta	497,274	-11.7%	563,188	550,798	565,442	626,555
Chicago	311,231	-18.4%	381,466	358,481	365,259	404,953
Dallas	304,647	-11.8%	345,486	330,980	343,475	375,408
Kansas City	86,118	-18.4%	105,562	96,455	101,606	110,298
Denver	44,155	-12.9%	50,693	43,630	50,595	59,572
San Francisco	223,845	-20.7%	282,110	266,324	277,188	294,289
Seattle	58,854	-32.2%	86,743	88,129	93,447	91,545
Total DDS	1,969,328	-15.9%	2,343,012	2,243,851	2,347,403	2,536,163

Table D–2: Clearances

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	83,952	-13.5%	97,107	95,778	102,454	106,418
New York	150,851	-16.7%	181,073	190,326	186,868	212,801
Philadelphia	201,003	-13.7%	232,847	231,791	252,484	252,271
Atlanta	468,091	-12.7%	535,975	537,435	566,276	621,494
Chicago	313,142	-13.2%	360,736	356,938	378,882	405,311
Dallas	289,196	-13.8%	335,320	336,190	346,852	368,492
Kansas City	86,189	-14.1%	100,312	96,483	102,975	112,028
Denver	43,663	10.1%	39,669	42,766	53,525	57,501
San Francisco	228,161	-16.4%	272,875	264,775	288,577	301,497
Seattle	60,991	-23.3%	79,519	86,028	91,988	95,586
Total DDS	1,925,239	-13.9%	2,235,433	2,238,510	2,370,881	2,533,399

Table D–3: Determinations

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	81,595	-13.9%	94,733	93,329	99,788	103,690
New York	146,408	-17.0%	176,320	184,778	181,476	207,624
Philadelphia	194,026	-13.7%	224,863	224,058	245,034	244,129
Atlanta	453,425	-12.6%	518,817	522,496	552,377	607,275
Chicago	304,618	-13.4%	351,679	348,196	370,319	395,824
Dallas	280,682	-14.1%	326,584	327,119	336,736	354,646
Kansas City	82,583	-14.7%	96,837	93,429	99,653	108,498
Denver	41,214	9.0%	37,814	41,066	50,675	54,423
San Francisco	223,647	-16.5%	267,866	259,650	283,341	295,556
Seattle	58,916	-23.8%	77,330	82,978	88,882	92,522
Total DDS	1,867,114	-14.1%	2,172,843	2,177,099	2,308,281	2,464,187

Table D–4: No Determinations

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	2,354	-0.7%	2,371	2,448	2,665	2,725
New York	4,443	-6.5%	4,752	5,547	5,390	5,177
Philadelphia	6,964	-12.7%	7,977	7,727	7,435	8,122
Atlanta	14,666	-14.5%	17,151	14,933	13,895	14,215
Chicago	8,523	-5.9%	9,055	8,743	8,560	9,483
Dallas	8,509	-2.6%	8,736	9,070	10,114	13,838
Kansas City	3,605	3.8%	3,474	3,054	3,317	3,530
Denver	2,445	32.1%	1,851	1,699	2,849	3,078
San Francisco	4,512	-9.9%	5,006	5,117	5,232	5,925
Seattle	2,073	-5.3%	2,188	3,050	3,106	3,064
Total DDS	58,094	-7.1%	62,561	61,388	62,563	69,157

Table D-5: Allowances

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	35,483	-11.4%	40,058	38,096	39,296	40,928
New York	61,914	-16.8%	74,441	73,070	70,876	78,392
Philadelphia	76,018	-13.7%	88,089	85,072	88,249	87,977
Atlanta	159,507	-12.6%	182,588	169,121	168,371	179,602
Chicago	117,347	-13.8%	136,165	127,263	131,439	135,885
Dallas	95,963	-17.0%	115,670	109,748	114,145	119,362
Kansas City	36,002	-15.4%	42,538	37,324	37,772	39,192
Denver	16,985	-1.9%	17,318	16,881	19,364	20,229
San Francisco	83,278	-15.6%	98,640	88,711	93,064	97,064
Seattle	24,989	-20.8%	31,540	32,801	34,383	36,273
Total DDS	707,486	-14.5%	827,047	778,087	796,959	834,904

Table D-6: Allowance Rates

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	43.5%	2.8%	42.3%	40.8%	39.4%	39.5%
New York	42.3%	0.2%	42.2%	39.5%	39.1%	37.8%
Philadelphia	39.2%	0.0%	39.2%	38.0%	36.0%	36.0%
Atlanta	35.2%	0.0%	35.2%	32.4%	30.5%	29.6%
Chicago	38.5%	-0.5%	38.7%	36.5%	35.5%	34.3%
Dallas	34.2%	-3.5%	35.4%	33.5%	33.9%	33.7%
Kansas City	43.6%	-0.8%	43.9%	39.9%	37.9%	36.1%
Denver	41.2%	-10.0%	45.8%	41.1%	38.2%	37.2%
San Francisco	37.2%	1.1%	36.8%	34.2%	32.8%	32.8%
Seattle	42.4%	4.0%	40.8%	39.5%	38.7%	39.2%
Total DDS	37.9%	-0.4%	38.1%	35.7%	34.5%	33.9%

Table D-7: Denials

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	46,112	-15.7%	54,675	55,233	60,492	62,762
New York	84,494	-17.1%	101,879	111,708	110,600	129,232
Philadelphia	118,008	-13.7%	136,774	138,986	156,785	156,152
Atlanta	293,918	-12.6%	336,229	353,375	384,006	427,673
Chicago	187,271	-13.1%	215,514	220,933	238,880	259,939
Dallas	184,719	-12.4%	210,914	217,371	222,591	235,284
Kansas City	46,581	-14.2%	54,299	56,105	61,881	69,306
Denver	24,229	18.2%	20,496	24,185	31,311	34,194
San Francisco	140,369	-17.1%	169,226	170,939	190,277	198,492
Seattle	33,927	-25.9%	45,790	50,177	54,499	56,249
Total DDS	1,159,628	-13.8%	1,345,796	1,399,012	1,511,322	1,629,283

Table D-8: Denial Rates

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	56.5%	-2.1%	57.7%	59.2%	60.6%	60.5%
New York	57.7%	-0.1%	57.8%	60.5%	60.9%	62.2%
Philadelphia	60.8%	0.0%	60.8%	62.0%	64.0%	64.0%
Atlanta	64.8%	0.0%	64.8%	67.6%	69.5%	70.4%
Chicago	61.5%	0.3%	61.3%	63.5%	64.5%	65.7%
Dallas	65.8%	1.9%	64.6%	66.5%	66.1%	66.3%
Kansas City	56.4%	0.6%	56.1%	60.1%	62.1%	63.9%
Denver	58.8%	8.5%	54.2%	58.9%	61.8%	62.8%
San Francisco	62.8%	-0.7%	63.2%	65.8%	67.2%	67.2%
Seattle	57.6%	-2.8%	59.2%	60.5%	61.3%	60.8%
Total DDS	62.1%	0.3%	61.9%	64.3%	65.5%	66.1%

Table D-9: Consultative Examinations

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	17,861	-35.1%	27,538	27,246	29,914	32,358
New York	71,973	-28.2%	100,187	111,646	108,471	124,971
Philadelphia	62,766	-25.1%	83,812	79,801	86,184	85,874
Atlanta	174,303	-21.3%	221,406	228,313	236,259	258,284
Chicago	106,582	-27.5%	146,950	153,762	162,156	177,065
Dallas	77,782	-33.8%	117,479	117,797	124,497	130,880
Kansas City	22,239	-36.7%	35,151	33,086	33,887	34,583
Denver	11,636	-9.8%	12,906	15,990	20,389	22,183
San Francisco	65,724	-28.1%	91,445	98,646	110,512	125,369
Seattle	13,845	-36.3%	21,737	21,725	23,506	27,368
Total DDS	624,711	-27.2%	858,611	888,012	935,775	1,018,935

Table D-10: Consultative Examination Rates

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	21.3%	-25.0%	28.4%	28.4%	29.2%	30.4%
New York	47.7%	-13.8%	55.3%	58.7%	58.0%	58.7%
Philadelphia	31.2%	-13.2%	36.0%	34.4%	34.1%	34.0%
Atlanta	37.2%	-9.9%	41.3%	42.5%	41.7%	41.6%
Chicago	34.0%	-16.4%	40.7%	43.1%	42.8%	43.7%
Dallas	26.9%	-23.2%	35.0%	35.0%	35.9%	35.5%
Kansas City	25.8%	-26.4%	35.0%	34.3%	32.9%	30.9%
Denver	26.6%	-18.1%	32.5%	37.4%	38.1%	38.6%
San Francisco	28.8%	-14.0%	33.5%	37.3%	38.3%	41.6%
Seattle	22.7%	-17.0%	27.3%	25.3%	25.6%	28.6%
Total DDS	32.4%	-15.5%	38.4%	39.7%	39.5%	40.2%

Table D–11: Medical Evidence of Record

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	74,458	-14.9%	87,483	87,825	94,668	98,462
New York	137,657	-16.0%	163,849	174,179	172,557	195,818
Philadelphia	171,249	-13.4%	197,680	200,066	223,725	225,023
Atlanta	411,404	-11.8%	466,349	477,470	511,337	564,514
Chicago	264,393	-11.3%	298,086	303,846	329,321	356,754
Dallas	246,601	-13.1%	283,921	285,015	295,138	311,141
Kansas City	73,557	-12.1%	83,636	81,445	87,798	96,098
Denver	34,904	12.8%	30,939	34,564	44,925	49,959
San Francisco	148,116	-17.9%	180,304	181,944	201,301	219,235
Seattle	51,583	-21.3%	65,541	68,611	76,497	83,198
Total DDS	1,613,922	-13.1%	1,857,788	1,894,965	2,037,267	2,200,202

Table D–12: Medical Evidence of Record Rates

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	88.7%	-1.6%	90.1%	91.7%	92.4%	92.5%
New York	91.3%	0.8%	90.5%	91.5%	92.3%	92.0%
Philadelphia	85.2%	0.4%	84.9%	86.3%	88.6%	89.2%
Atlanta	87.9%	1.0%	87.0%	88.8%	90.3%	90.8%
Chicago	84.4%	2.2%	82.6%	85.1%	86.9%	88.0%
Dallas	85.3%	0.7%	84.7%	84.8%	85.1%	84.4%
Kansas City	85.3%	2.4%	83.4%	84.4%	85.3%	85.8%
Denver	79.9%	2.5%	78.0%	80.8%	83.9%	86.9%
San Francisco	64.9%	-1.8%	66.1%	68.7%	69.8%	72.7%
Seattle	84.6%	2.6%	82.4%	79.8%	83.2%	87.0%
Total DDS	83.8%	0.9%	83.1%	84.7%	85.9%	86.8%

Table D–13: Pending

Region	As of March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	As of March 2020	As of March 2019	As of March 2018	As of March 2017
Boston	24,870	-11.2%	28,010	24,649	22,871	25,045
New York	46,263	23.6%	37,428	33,612	41,371	35,560
Philadelphia	66,933	-2.2%	68,455	59,095	63,166	60,362
Atlanta	193,637	14.0%	169,895	143,353	131,610	134,074
Chicago	102,431	-1.6%	104,104	82,851	80,863	94,201
Dallas	100,689	15.3%	87,339	76,895	84,093	88,209
Kansas City	23,008	-9.6%	25,447	20,249	20,112	21,307
Denver	16,414	-16.4%	19,640	12,267	12,911	17,399
San Francisco	64,316	-6.4%	68,718	60,244	58,548	69,644
Seattle	22,449	-13.2%	25,849	18,806	17,640	16,014
Total DDS	661,010	4.1%	634,885	532,021	533,185	561,815

Table D–14: Average Processing Time

Region	October 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	October 2019 to March 2020	October 2018 to March 2019	October 2017 to March 2018	October 2016 to March 2017
Boston	124.6	26.6%	98.4	89.5	89.4	93.6
New York	126.1	61.9%	77.9	78.7	76.3	65.0
Philadelphia	139.6	35.7%	102.9	101.9	90.5	90.5
Atlanta	150.2	43.3%	104.8	102.2	87.1	84.2
Chicago	139.2	48.4%	93.8	88.5	85.6	87.8
Dallas	134.0	49.4%	89.7	92.9	91.1	93.0
Kansas City	122.9	37.2%	89.6	82.9	76.0	73.9
Denver	150.7	20.0%	125.6	95.9	101.3	99.5
San Francisco	134.2	52.2%	88.2	83.5	82.9	93.0
Seattle	174.5	73.6%	100.5	87.3	73.9	73.3
Total DDS	139.4	46.0%	95.5	92.4	86.0	86.2

As seen in Table D–15, Seattle had the largest percent decreases in the majority of the DDS initial claims workload categories; conversely, Denver had the largest percent increases in the majority of the initial claims' DDS workload categories.

Table D–15: Summary of Regions with the Largest Percent Decrease and Increase (COVID-19 Period versus Prior-year Period) – Initial Claims

Category	Number of Regions with a Percent Decrease	Region with Largest Percent Decrease	Percent of the Decrease	Number of Regions with a Percent Increase	Region with Largest Percent Increase	Percent of the Increase
Receipts	10	Seattle	-32.2%	0	None	None
Clearances	9	Seattle	-23.3%	1	Denver	10.1%
Determinations	9	Seattle	-23.8%	1	Denver	9.0%
No Determinations	8	Atlanta	-14.5%	2	Denver	32.1%
Allowances	10	Seattle	-20.8%	0	None	None
Allowance Rates ¹	4	Denver	-10.0%	4	Seattle	3.9%
Denials	9	Seattle	-25.9%	1	Denver	18.2%
Denial Rates ²	4	Seattle	-2.7%	4	Denver	8.5%
Consultative Examinations (CE)	10	Kansas City	-36.7%	0	None	None
CE Rates	10	Kansas City	-26.3%	0	None	None
Medical Evidence of Record (MER)	9	Seattle	-21.3%	1	Denver	12.8%
MER Rates	2	San Francisco	-1.8%	8	Seattle	2.7%
Pending	7	Denver	-16.4%	3	New York	23.6%
Average Processing Time	0	None	None	10	Seattle	73.6%

Disability Determination Services' Workload - Reconsiderations

Table D–16 through Table D–29 show the DDS workload categories for reconsiderations summarized by region. The third column in each table represents the percentage change from the prior period to the COVID-19 period.

¹ Allowance rates for Atlanta and Philadelphia remained the same from the prior year.

² Denial rates for Atlanta and Philadelphia remained the same from the prior year.

Table D-16: Receipts

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	19,657	-24.0%	25,879	23,951	26,785	27,296
New York	36,529	-20.4%	45,910	22,524	16,482	16,715
Philadelphia	48,672	-7.3%	52,484	34,889	39,066	41,621
Atlanta	131,844	-5.9%	140,155	146,992	158,390	168,679
Chicago	86,149	-6.3%	91,939	79,073	85,785	92,414
Dallas	85,424	-12.3%	97,402	84,273	75,431	69,515
Kansas City	20,924	55.8%	13,434	12,850	13,337	15,194
Denver	13,442	19.3%	11,265	7,473	8,737	9,289
San Francisco	58,927	-18.7%	72,516	70,256	73,838	68,376
Seattle	15,512	-30.8%	22,400	23,350	26,444	27,808
Total DDS	517,080	-9.8%	573,384	505,631	524,295	536,907

Table D-17: Clearances

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	21,971	-7.4%	23,735	25,580	26,226	27,349
New York	33,829	-22.5%	43,633	18,562	15,539	16,128
Philadelphia	49,195	22.9%	40,024	35,458	39,588	41,054
Atlanta	113,709	-13.8%	131,897	144,681	157,041	165,166
Chicago	86,202	7.4%	80,236	78,484	88,137	90,539
Dallas	80,765	-10.4%	90,109	82,105	74,677	68,451
Kansas City	19,370	63.5%	11,850	12,484	13,733	15,092
Denver	11,263	39.4%	8,079	7,094	9,167	9,140
San Francisco	57,016	-16.4%	68,176	69,398	75,289	68,722
Seattle	13,878	-31.9%	20,373	22,641	25,782	29,212
Total DDS	487,198	-6.0%	518,112	496,487	525,179	530,853

Table D–18: Determinations

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	21,559	-7.5%	23,296	25,078	25,788	26,874
New York	33,101	-22.2%	42,531	17,859	14,999	15,679
Philadelphia	47,939	23.4%	38,854	34,089	38,551	40,095
Atlanta	111,080	-13.8%	128,910	141,376	153,550	162,386
Chicago	84,589	7.4%	78,754	77,210	86,920	89,191
Dallas	78,544	-10.5%	87,714	79,867	72,715	66,426
Kansas City	18,848	65.0%	11,420	12,090	13,389	14,728
Denver	10,936	39.7%	7,829	6,891	8,928	8,896
San Francisco	56,401	-16.4%	67,481	68,697	74,594	68,073
Seattle	13,483	-32.3%	19,929	22,115	25,284	28,725
Total DDS	476,480	-6.0%	506,718	485,272	514,718	521,073

Table D–19: No Determinations

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	412	-6.2%	439	502	438	475
New York	728	-33.9%	1,101	703	540	448
Philadelphia	1,255	7.4%	1,169	1,369	1,036	958
Atlanta	2,629	-12.0%	2,987	3,302	3,491	2,778
Chicago	1,613	8.8%	1,482	1,274	1,217	1,348
Dallas	2,221	-7.3%	2,395	2,238	1,962	2,024
Kansas City	522	21.4%	430	394	344	364
Denver	327	31.3%	249	202	239	244
San Francisco	615	-11.5%	695	700	695	648
Seattle	395	-11.0%	444	526	498	487
Total DDS	10,717	-5.9%	11,391	11,210	10,460	9,774

Table D–20: Allowances

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	3,799	-4.9%	3,993	4,171	4,522	4,694
New York	5,155	-30.9%	7,462	2,583	2,239	2,167
Philadelphia	6,600	22.1%	5,406	4,675	5,560	5,457
Atlanta	12,451	-18.2%	15,217	15,931	17,024	16,970
Chicago	10,417	2.3%	10,184	8,664	10,141	10,486
Dallas	9,554	-19.9%	11,926	9,722	9,596	8,416
Kansas City	2,159	47.4%	1,465	1,449	1,602	1,828
Denver	1,403	26.6%	1,108	814	1,070	1,063
San Francisco	7,151	-22.9%	9,277	8,147	8,997	8,071
Seattle	1,867	-34.7%	2,861	2,782	3,345	3,766
Total DDS	60,556	-12.1%	68,899	58,938	64,096	62,918

Table D–21: Allowance Rates

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	17.6%	2.8%	17.1%	16.6%	17.5%	17.5%
New York	15.6%	-11.2%	17.5%	14.5%	14.9%	13.8%
Philadelphia	13.8%	-1.1%	13.9%	13.7%	14.4%	13.6%
Atlanta	11.2%	-5.0%	11.8%	11.3%	11.1%	10.5%
Chicago	12.3%	-4.8%	12.9%	11.2%	11.7%	11.8%
Dallas	12.2%	-10.5%	13.6%	12.2%	13.2%	12.7%
Kansas City	11.5%	-10.7%	12.8%	12.0%	12.0%	12.4%
Denver	12.8%	-9.4%	14.2%	11.8%	12.0%	11.9%
San Francisco	12.7%	-7.8%	13.7%	11.9%	12.1%	11.9%
Seattle	13.8%	-3.5%	14.4%	12.6%	13.2%	13.1%
Total DDS	12.7%	-6.5%	13.6%	12.1%	12.5%	12.1%

Table D–22: Denials

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	17,760	-8.0%	19,303	20,907	21,266	22,180
New York	27,946	-20.3%	35,069	15,276	12,760	13,512
Philadelphia	41,339	23.6%	33,448	29,414	32,991	34,638
Atlanta	98,629	-13.2%	113,693	125,445	136,526	145,416
Chicago	74,172	8.2%	68,570	68,546	76,779	78,705
Dallas	68,990	-9.0%	75,788	70,145	63,119	58,010
Kansas City	16,689	67.6%	9,955	10,641	11,787	12,900
Denver	9,533	41.8%	6,721	6,077	7,858	7,833
San Francisco	49,250	-15.4%	58,204	60,550	65,597	60,002
Seattle	11,616	-31.9%	17,068	19,333	21,939	24,959
Total DDS	415,924	-5.0%	437,819	426,334	450,622	458,155

Table D–23: Denial Rates

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	82.4%	-0.6%	82.9%	83.4%	82.5%	82.5%
New York	84.4%	2.4%	82.5%	85.5%	85.1%	86.2%
Philadelphia	86.2%	0.2%	86.1%	86.3%	85.6%	86.4%
Atlanta	88.8%	0.7%	88.2%	88.7%	88.9%	89.5%
Chicago	87.7%	0.7%	87.1%	88.8%	88.3%	88.2%
Dallas	87.8%	1.7%	86.4%	87.8%	86.8%	87.3%
Kansas City	88.5%	1.6%	87.2%	88.0%	88.0%	87.6%
Denver	87.2%	1.5%	85.8%	88.2%	88.0%	88.1%
San Francisco	87.3%	1.2%	86.3%	88.1%	87.9%	88.1%
Seattle	86.2%	0.6%	85.6%	87.4%	86.8%	86.9%
Total DDS	87.3%	1.0%	86.4%	87.9%	87.5%	87.9%

Table D–24: Consultative Examinations

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	2,466	-34.2%	3,748	4,017	3,821	3,826
New York	5,705	-15.3%	6,733	3,644	2,785	2,966
Philadelphia	6,677	46.3%	4,564	5,092	6,111	6,293
Atlanta	17,774	-21.0%	22,495	24,516	23,761	23,203
Chicago	10,787	-15.7%	12,797	11,139	12,031	13,424
Dallas	9,399	-22.1%	12,065	10,417	8,860	8,904
Kansas City	1,740	-1.6%	1,769	1,838	2,026	2,453
Denver	1,887	39.7%	1,351	853	1,214	1,196
San Francisco	6,773	-17.8%	8,236	8,473	10,259	9,728
Seattle	1,944	-37.2%	3,098	3,025	3,209	3,543
Total DDS	65,152	-15.2%	76,856	73,014	74,077	75,536

Table D–25: Consultative Examination Rates

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	11.2%	-28.9%	15.8%	15.7%	14.6%	14.0%
New York	16.9%	9.3%	15.4%	19.6%	17.9%	18.4%
Philadelphia	13.6%	19.0%	11.4%	14.4%	15.4%	15.3%
Atlanta	15.6%	-8.3%	17.1%	16.9%	15.1%	14.0%
Chicago	12.5%	-21.5%	15.9%	14.2%	13.7%	14.8%
Dallas	11.6%	-13.1%	13.4%	12.7%	11.9%	13.0%
Kansas City	9.0%	-39.8%	14.9%	14.7%	14.8%	16.3%
Denver	16.8%	0.2%	16.7%	12.0%	13.2%	13.1%
San Francisco	11.9%	-1.7%	12.1%	12.2%	13.6%	14.2%
Seattle	14.0%	-7.9%	15.2%	13.4%	12.4%	12.1%
Total DDS	13.4%	-9.8%	14.8%	14.7%	14.1%	14.2%

Table D–26: Medical Evidence of Record

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	18,448	-7.5%	19,935	21,151	22,135	22,598
New York	27,094	-20.2%	33,934	13,128	11,385	11,388
Philadelphia	37,076	28.6%	28,837	24,845	29,371	30,557
Atlanta	81,591	-12.5%	93,278	103,069	114,561	119,209
Chicago	64,542	7.7%	59,939	59,273	69,671	71,694
Dallas	55,751	-10.3%	62,187	54,977	51,956	46,663
Kansas City	13,852	53.5%	9,023	9,533	11,029	12,310
Denver	8,832	44.6%	6,107	4,911	6,845	6,959
San Francisco	30,212	-16.0%	35,977	36,587	43,474	39,739
Seattle	10,685	-29.4%	15,145	16,464	19,623	22,309
Total DDS	348,083	-4.5%	364,362	343,938	380,050	383,426

Table D–27: Medical Evidence of Record Rates

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	84.0%	0.0%	84.0%	82.7%	84.4%	82.6%
New York	80.1%	3.0%	77.8%	70.7%	73.3%	70.6%
Philadelphia	75.4%	4.6%	72.0%	70.1%	74.2%	74.4%
Atlanta	71.8%	1.5%	70.7%	71.2%	72.9%	72.2%
Chicago	74.9%	0.2%	74.7%	75.5%	79.0%	79.2%
Dallas	69.0%	0.0%	69.0%	67.0%	69.6%	68.2%
Kansas City	71.5%	-6.1%	76.1%	76.4%	80.3%	81.6%
Denver	78.4%	3.7%	75.6%	69.2%	74.7%	76.1%
San Francisco	53.0%	0.4%	52.8%	52.7%	57.7%	57.8%
Seattle	77.0%	3.6%	74.3%	72.7%	76.1%	76.4%
Total DDS	71.4%	1.6%	70.3%	69.3%	72.4%	72.2%

Table D–28: Pending

Region	As of March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	As of March 2020	As of March 2019	As of March 2018	As of March 2017
Boston	5,238	-29.6%	7,444	5,236	6,867	6,236
New York	12,066	30.0%	9,279	7,597	3,599	2,821
Philadelphia	17,690	-8.6%	19,348	7,177	8,784	9,365
Atlanta	55,114	47.4%	37,387	31,583	29,581	28,600
Chicago	27,352	-0.1%	27,392	15,738	15,596	17,884
Dallas	26,545	10.4%	24,043	16,741	15,068	14,337
Kansas City	5,385	34.8%	3,996	2,411	2,131	2,556
Denver	6,354	33.0%	4,776	2,061	1,748	2,289
San Francisco	16,906	13.3%	14,927	11,682	12,376	14,236
Seattle	7,436	18.8%	6,260	4,968	4,207	3,483
Total DDS	180,086	16.3%	154,852	105,194	99,957	101,807

Table D–29: Average Processing Time

Region	October 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	October 2019 to March 2020	October 2018 to March 2019	October 2017 to March 2018	October 2016 to March 2017
Boston	100.7	5.6%	95.4	85.4	88.3	86.1
New York	103.8	33.9%	77.5	79.0	68.0	72.4
Philadelphia	135.2	41.7%	95.4	83.8	95.2	84.3
Atlanta	112.5	30.2%	86.4	83.6	70.1	63.5
Chicago	105.5	18.1%	89.3	69.8	64.6	75.8
Dallas	105.8	22.0%	86.7	86.0	73.0	75.7
Kansas City	87.2	15.0%	75.8	71.4	61.3	66.2
Denver	158.6	15.7%	137.1	66.9	79.6	83.8
San Francisco	97.7	27.0%	76.9	73.6	67.6	71.7
Seattle	178.9	61.5%	110.8	70.6	59.2	57.0
Total DDS	111.5	25.8%	88.6	79.3	71.5	71.5

As seen in Table D–30, Seattle had the largest percent decreases in the majority of the DDS reconsideration workload categories; conversely, Kansas City had the largest percent increases in the majority of the DDS reconsideration workload categories.

Table D–30: Summary of Regions with the Largest Percent Decrease and Increase (COVID-19 Period versus Prior-year Period) – Reconsiderations

Category	Number of Regions with a Percent Decrease	Region with Largest Percent Decrease	Percent of the Decrease	Number of Regions with a Percent Increase	Region with Largest Percent Increase	Percent of the Increase
Receipts	8	Seattle	-30.8%	2	Kansas City	55.8%
Clearances	6	Seattle	-31.9%	4	Kansas City	63.5%
Determinations	6	Seattle	-32.3%	4	Kansas City	65.0%
No Determinations	6	New York	-33.9%	4	Denver	31.3%
Allowances	6	Seattle	-34.7%	4	Kansas City	47.4%
Allowance Rates	9	New York	-10.9%	1	Boston	2.9%
Denials	6	Seattle	-31.9%	4	Kansas City	67.6%
Denial Rates	1	Boston	-0.6%	9	New York	2.3%
CEs	8	Seattle	-37.2%	2	Philadelphia	46.3%
CE Rates	7	Kansas City	-39.6%	3	Philadelphia	19.3%
MER	6	Seattle	-29.4%	4	Kansas City	53.5%
MER Rates ³	1	Kansas City	-6.0%	7	Philadelphia	4.7%
Pending	3	Boston	-29.6%	7	Atlanta	47.4%
Average Processing Time	0	None	None	10	Seattle	61.5%

Disability Determination Workload – Continuing Disability Reviews

Table D–31 through Table D–44 show the DDS workload categories for CDRs summarized by region. The third column in each table represents the percentage change from the prior period to the COVID-19 period.

³ MER rates for Boston and Dallas remained the same from the prior year.

Table D-31: Receipts

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	27,373	-15.5%	32,379	43,532	44,382	49,926
New York	39,145	-39.1%	64,261	78,633	77,464	86,270
Philadelphia	46,291	-38.8%	75,591	88,932	82,775	91,439
Atlanta	94,227	-41.2%	160,179	205,663	212,972	226,710
Chicago	55,788	-50.8%	113,436	145,509	131,524	147,935
Dallas	78,240	-33.9%	118,429	148,282	135,055	150,959
Kansas City	15,878	-35.8%	24,743	30,331	33,747	27,771
Denver	7,141	-59.2%	17,500	20,173	17,942	18,610
San Francisco	49,699	-41.0%	84,231	96,397	102,881	114,661
Seattle	14,547	-42.2%	25,176	34,847	30,940	33,332
Total DDS	428,329	-40.2%	715,925	892,299	869,682	947,613

Table D-32: Clearances

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	23,884	-27.3%	32,861	45,649	46,083	52,373
New York	38,754	-41.3%	66,071	79,605	73,650	88,228
Philadelphia	47,415	-32.4%	70,177	88,176	95,289	89,855
Atlanta	86,210	-45.3%	157,577	207,369	213,663	237,542
Chicago	55,892	-49.6%	110,862	151,604	132,820	161,052
Dallas	66,241	-42.4%	115,087	154,249	131,763	171,529
Kansas City	15,762	-29.8%	22,449	31,950	34,057	30,362
Denver	6,959	-58.6%	16,802	21,139	17,957	18,825
San Francisco	44,322	-44.4%	79,759	93,602	107,317	111,812
Seattle	11,688	-54.8%	25,841	34,218	29,983	36,429
Total DDS	397,127	-43.1%	697,486	907,561	882,582	998,007

Table D–33: Determinations

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	23,082	-27.8%	31,990	44,451	44,823	51,049
New York	36,542	-42.2%	63,262	76,471	70,629	84,525
Philadelphia	45,190	-32.7%	67,177	84,523	90,189	85,848
Atlanta	82,165	-45.9%	151,777	200,117	206,782	230,028
Chicago	53,243	-50.5%	107,550	147,593	129,279	156,267
Dallas	64,208	-42.7%	112,075	150,303	127,065	165,845
Kansas City	15,174	-30.3%	21,785	31,060	33,242	29,461
Denver	6,425	-60.0%	16,076	20,367	16,453	17,356
San Francisco	43,236	-44.5%	77,860	91,322	104,380	109,070
Seattle	11,065	-55.5%	24,874	32,432	28,270	34,634
Total DDS	380,330	-43.6%	674,426	878,639	851,112	964,083

Table D–34: No Determinations

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	802	-7.9%	871	1,198	1,260	1,324
New York	2,212	-21.3%	2,809	3,134	3,021	3,703
Philadelphia	2,225	-25.8%	3,000	3,653	5,099	4,007
Atlanta	4,045	-30.3%	5,800	7,252	6,879	7,514
Chicago	2,649	-20.0%	3,312	4,011	3,541	4,785
Dallas	2,033	-32.5%	3,012	3,946	4,698	5,684
Kansas City	588	-11.4%	664	890	815	901
Denver	534	-26.4%	726	772	1,504	1,469
San Francisco	1,086	-42.8%	1,897	2,280	2,937	2,742
Seattle	623	-35.6%	967	1,786	1,713	1,795
Total DDS	16,797	-27.2%	23,058	28,922	31,467	33,924

Table D–35: Continuances

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	20,024	-25.6%	26,899	37,373	37,561	41,535
New York	31,182	-41.2%	53,022	64,014	58,050	67,801
Philadelphia	36,258	-33.7%	54,682	69,328	71,144	67,397
Atlanta	61,663	-46.4%	115,143	149,531	153,752	166,559
Chicago	42,520	-51.5%	87,598	119,753	102,592	121,810
Dallas	49,444	-43.8%	87,938	116,890	96,088	127,736
Kansas City	13,046	-29.2%	18,439	25,518	27,285	23,376
Denver	5,128	-61.0%	13,139	16,627	13,119	13,487
San Francisco	33,329	-44.1%	59,673	67,770	75,830	78,739
Seattle	9,452	-55.9%	21,412	28,233	24,416	30,120
Total DDS	302,046	-43.9%	537,945	695,037	659,837	738,560

Table D–36: Continuance Rates

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	86.8%	3.2%	84.1%	84.1%	83.8%	81.4%
New York	85.3%	1.8%	83.8%	83.7%	82.2%	80.2%
Philadelphia	80.2%	-1.4%	81.4%	82.0%	78.9%	78.5%
Atlanta	75.0%	-1.1%	75.9%	74.7%	74.4%	72.4%
Chicago	79.9%	-2.0%	81.4%	81.1%	79.4%	77.9%
Dallas	77.0%	-1.9%	78.5%	77.8%	75.6%	77.0%
Kansas City	86.0%	1.6%	84.6%	82.2%	82.1%	79.3%
Denver	79.8%	-2.3%	81.7%	81.6%	79.7%	77.7%
San Francisco	77.1%	0.6%	76.6%	74.2%	72.6%	72.2%
Seattle	85.4%	-0.8%	86.1%	87.1%	86.4%	87.0%
Total DDS	79.4%	-0.4%	79.8%	79.1%	77.5%	76.6%

Table D–37: Cessations

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	3,058	-39.9%	5,091	7,078	7,262	9,514
New York	5,360	-47.7%	10,240	12,457	12,579	16,724
Philadelphia	8,932	-28.5%	12,495	15,195	19,045	18,451
Atlanta	20,502	-44.0%	36,634	50,586	53,030	63,469
Chicago	10,723	-46.3%	19,952	27,840	26,687	34,457
Dallas	14,764	-38.8%	24,137	33,413	30,977	38,109
Kansas City	2,128	-36.4%	3,346	5,542	5,957	6,085
Denver	1,297	-55.8%	2,937	3,740	3,334	3,869
San Francisco	9,907	-45.5%	18,187	23,552	28,550	30,331
Seattle	1,613	-53.4%	3,462	4,199	3,854	4,514
Total DDS	78,284	-42.6%	136,481	183,602	191,275	225,523

Table D–38: Cessation Rates

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	13.2%	-16.8%	15.9%	15.9%	16.2%	18.6%
New York	14.7%	-9.4%	16.2%	16.3%	17.8%	19.8%
Philadelphia	19.8%	6.3%	18.6%	18.0%	21.1%	21.5%
Atlanta	25.0%	3.4%	24.1%	25.3%	25.6%	27.6%
Chicago	20.1%	8.6%	18.6%	18.9%	20.6%	22.1%
Dallas	23.0%	6.8%	21.5%	22.2%	24.4%	23.0%
Kansas City	14.0%	-8.7%	15.4%	17.8%	17.9%	20.7%
Denver	20.2%	10.5%	18.3%	18.4%	20.3%	22.3%
San Francisco	22.9%	-1.9%	23.4%	25.8%	27.4%	27.8%
Seattle	14.6%	4.7%	13.9%	12.9%	13.6%	13.0%
Total DDS	20.6%	1.7%	20.2%	20.9%	22.5%	23.4%

Table D–39: Consultative Examinations

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	4,866	-49.1%	9,552	12,396	12,268	15,861
New York	16,109	-49.8%	32,088	38,570	37,188	45,525
Philadelphia	15,239	-41.2%	25,938	30,530	33,317	32,700
Atlanta	34,660	-46.8%	65,198	88,255	87,120	102,089
Chicago	17,407	-57.9%	41,337	61,378	55,067	72,297
Dallas	13,690	-46.5%	25,566	32,181	32,848	35,789
Kansas City	4,527	-39.6%	7,492	11,875	12,019	11,330
Denver	2,084	-68.1%	6,531	9,690	7,842	7,101
San Francisco	16,785	-40.4%	28,152	34,743	43,670	54,510
Seattle	3,384	-59.7%	8,390	11,011	10,073	13,301
Total DDS	128,751	-48.5%	250,244	330,629	331,412	390,503

Table D–40: Consultative Examination Rates

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	20.4%	-29.9%	29.1%	27.2%	26.6%	30.3%
New York	41.6%	-14.4%	48.6%	48.5%	50.5%	51.6%
Philadelphia	32.1%	-13.0%	37.0%	34.6%	35.0%	36.4%
Atlanta	40.2%	-2.8%	41.4%	42.6%	40.8%	43.0%
Chicago	31.1%	-16.5%	37.3%	40.5%	41.5%	44.9%
Dallas	20.7%	-7.0%	22.2%	20.9%	24.9%	20.9%
Kansas City	28.7%	-13.9%	33.4%	37.2%	35.3%	37.3%
Denver	29.9%	-23.0%	38.9%	45.8%	43.7%	37.7%
San Francisco	37.9%	7.3%	35.3%	37.1%	40.7%	48.8%
Seattle	29.0%	-10.8%	32.5%	32.2%	33.6%	36.5%
Total DDS	32.4%	-9.6%	35.9%	36.4%	37.6%	39.1%

Table D-41: Medical Evidence of Record

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	20,423	-25.3%	27,332	39,284	40,251	46,202
New York	34,084	-39.8%	56,654	68,940	64,521	78,159
Philadelphia	38,097	-31.0%	55,236	69,964	78,567	75,957
Atlanta	73,608	-43.7%	130,842	175,161	184,184	208,473
Chicago	42,673	-47.5%	81,298	115,819	104,639	129,374
Dallas	52,800	-40.6%	88,920	120,078	102,968	122,635
Kansas City	12,575	-24.6%	16,677	24,379	26,908	24,226
Denver	5,477	-56.0%	12,436	16,110	13,909	15,009
San Francisco	23,514	-43.8%	41,862	51,371	59,790	67,119
Seattle	9,350	-52.7%	19,783	25,975	23,736	29,805
Total DDS	312,601	-41.1%	531,040	707,081	699,473	796,959

Table D-42: Medical Evidence of Record Rates

Region	April 2020 to March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2016 to March 2017
Boston	85.5%	2.8%	83.2%	86.1%	87.3%	88.2%
New York	87.9%	2.6%	85.7%	86.6%	87.6%	88.6%
Philadelphia	80.3%	2.1%	78.7%	79.3%	82.5%	84.5%
Atlanta	85.4%	2.8%	83.0%	84.5%	86.2%	87.8%
Chicago	76.3%	4.1%	73.3%	76.4%	78.8%	80.3%
Dallas	79.7%	3.2%	77.3%	77.8%	78.1%	71.5%
Kansas City	79.8%	7.4%	74.3%	76.3%	79.0%	79.8%
Denver	78.7%	6.3%	74.0%	76.2%	77.5%	79.7%
San Francisco	53.1%	1.1%	52.5%	54.9%	55.7%	60.0%
Seattle	80.0%	4.5%	76.6%	75.9%	79.2%	81.8%
Total DDS	78.7%	3.4%	76.1%	77.9%	79.3%	79.9%

Table D–43: Pending

Region	As of March 2021	Percent Change from Prior Year	As of March 2020	As of March 2019	As of March 2018	As of March 2017
Boston	12,192	37.8%	8,849	9,365	12,082	13,828
New York	15,210	1.4%	14,998	16,849	17,884	14,136
Philadelphia	27,478	-9.5%	30,346	25,694	25,513	38,428
Atlanta	59,202	6.7%	55,494	52,999	54,852	55,759
Chicago	30,172	-2.9%	31,060	28,451	34,555	35,842
Dallas	40,675	36.5%	29,788	30,649	38,144	34,975
Kansas City	7,057	-0.5%	7,090	4,807	6,368	6,622
Denver	4,478	2.0%	4,390	4,173	5,290	5,392
San Francisco	31,115	13.9%	27,327	23,894	25,475	36,616
Seattle	9,488	41.4%	6,711	7,403	6,757	5,787
Total DDS	237,067	9.7%	216,053	204,284	226,920	247,385

Denver had the largest percent decreases in the majority of the DDS CDR workload categories. There were no percent increases for the majority of the DDS reconsideration workload categories (see Table D–44).

Table D–44: Summary of Regions with the Largest Percent Decrease and Increase (COVID-19 Period versus Prior-year Period) – Continuing Disability Reviews

Category	Number of Regions with a Percent Decrease	Region with Largest Percent Decrease	Percent of the Decrease	Number of Regions with a Percent Increase	Region with Largest Percent Increase	Percent of the Increase
Receipts	10	Denver	-59.2%	0	None	None
Clearances	10	Denver	-58.6%	0	None	None
Determinations	10	Denver	-60.0%	0	None	None
No Determinations	10	San Francisco	-42.8%	0	None	None
Continuances	10	Denver	-61.0%	0	None	None
Continuance Rates	6	Denver	-2.3%	4	Boston	3.2%
Cessations	10	Denver	-55.8%	0	None	None
Cessation Rates	4	Boston	-17.0%	6	Denver	10.4%
CEs	10	Denver	-68.1%	0	None	None
CE Rates	9	Boston	-29.9%	1	San Francisco	7.4%
MER	10	Denver	-56.0%	0	None	None
MER Rates	0	None	None	10	Kansas City	7.4%
Pending	3	Philadelphia	-9.5%	7	Seattle	41.4%

Appendix E –STAFFING AT THE DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES

Table E–1 shows the disability determination services' (DDS) staffing levels, which includes all employees (both full-time and part-time), as of the end of March for the years 2017 to 2021.

Table E–1: Total DDS Staffing

Region/State	As of March 2021	As of March 2020	As of March 2019	As of March 2018	As of March 2017
Boston Region	710	701	708	716	753
Connecticut	155	145	152	149	151
Maine	62	59	60	65	69
Massachusetts	302	319	328	337	354
New Hampshire	61	62	55	49	54
Rhode Island	75	66	63	64	70
Vermont	55	50	50	52	55
New York Region	1,291	1,326	1,393	1,297	1,366
New Jersey	360	335	346	336	349
New York	814	881	929	837	884
Puerto Rico	117	110	118	124	133
Philadelphia Region	1,650	1,513	1,566	1,525	1,650
Delaware	60	51	54	52	62
District of Columbia	63	58	55	58	60
Maryland	217	223	254	240	258
Pennsylvania	734	685	680	637	672
Virginia	399	313	337	344	387
West Virginia	177	183	186	194	211
Atlanta Region	3,813	3,592	3,678	3,902	4,271
Alabama	424	447	411	418	441
Florida	1,114	1,039	1,079	1,110	1,225
Georgia	470	433	480	496	529
Kentucky	324	326	341	354	405
Mississippi	265	248	253	262	258
North Carolina	537	447	443	537	607
South Carolina	293	290	311	337	372
Tennessee	386	362	360	388	434
Chicago Region	2,216	2,172	2,234	2,139	2,310
Illinois	398	408	438	427	470
Indiana	283	253	260	235	256
Michigan	560	598	601	578	628
Minnesota	204	187	188	173	174
Ohio	547	509	509	502	555
Wisconsin	224	217	238	224	227

Region/State	As of March 2021	As of March 2020	As of March 2019	As of March 2018	As of March 2017
Dallas Region	1,620	1,626	1,690	1,638	1,746
Arkansas	274	279	274	283	300
Louisiana	261	262	278	230	259
New Mexico	111	86	87	92	100
Oklahoma	310	256	247	263	278
Texas	664	743	804	770	809
Kansas City Region	706	668	702	690	746
Iowa	167	145	154	151	160
Kansas	67	57	75	83	89
Missouri	388	382	389	372	405
Nebraska	84	84	84	84	92
Denver Region	404	385	392	378	415
Colorado	176	178	154	150	159
Montana	44	39	49	39	46
North Dakota	26	25	30	26	32
South Dakota	42	37	41	41	43
Utah	87	82	93	97	108
Wyoming	29	24	25	25	27
San Francisco Region	1,711	1,616	1,751	1,761	1,872
Arizona	253	241	250	257	277
California	1,274	1,221	1,332	1,337	1,419
Hawaii	58	50	56	53	51
Nevada	126	104	113	114	125
Seattle Region	602	579	623	648	683
Alaska	34	32	32	30	32
Idaho	75	71	80	85	82
Oregon	155	146	158	166	186
Washington	338	330	353	367	383
Extended Service Teams (EST)¹	363	222	224	225	248
Virginia DDS EST	87	52	60	64	64
Mississippi DDS EST	0	0	0	1	21
Arkansas DDS EST	224	115	109	109	113
Oklahoma DDS EST	52	55	55	51	50
National DDS Staffing	15,086	14,400	14,961	14,919	16,060

¹ ESTs function as centralized units that process and adjudicate initial disability cases received from DDSs and field offices from across the country.

Appendix F—AGENCY COMMENTS



SOCIAL SECURITY

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 22, 2021

Refer To: TQA-1

To: Gail S. Ennis
Inspector General

From: Scott Frey 
Chief of Staff

Subject: Office of the Inspector General Draft Informational Report "Comparing the Social Security Administration's Disability Determination Services Workload Statistics During the COVID-19 Pandemic to Prior Years" (A-01-21-51038) — INFORMATION

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft report. We have no comment.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance. You may direct staff inquiries to Trae Sommer at (410) 965-9102.



Mission:

The Social Security Office of the Inspector General (OIG) serves the public through independent oversight of SSA's programs and operations.

Report:

Social Security-related scams and Social Security fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, at oig.ssa.gov/report.

Connect:

[OIG.SSA.GOV](https://oig.ssa.gov)

Visit our website to read about our audits, investigations, fraud alerts, news releases, whistleblower protection information, and more.

Follow us on social media via these external links:



Twitter: @TheSSAOIG



Facebook: OIGSSA



YouTube: TheSSAOIG



Subscribe to email updates on our website.