

MEMORANDUM

Re: Your Social Security Disability Hearing

Your hearing will be at the Office of Disability Adjudication & Review and you will receive a notice explaining the exact location and time. You should meet me at the site of the hearing at least a half an hour before your scheduled hearing time. If you cannot make it, please let me know as soon as possible. Please read or have someone read to you the following list of instructions:

1. Bring with you all the bottles of medicine that you are currently taking and any special devices or machines you regularly use (i.e. canes, breathing machine, etc...).
2. Don't dress up for your hearing. We want the Judge to see you as you normally look everyday around the house. Women should not wear fingernail polish or jewelry.
3. Take only your regular necessary medications prior to your hearing. Do not take any extra pain medication. We want the Judge to be able to see you in your normal state. Don't double up on your medicine, no matter how nervous you are, unless your doctor tells you to do so.
4. At your hearing, listen carefully to the questions that you are asked. If you don't understand a question, ask that it be repeated or explained. Answer the questions fully and completely.
5. Answer only the questions asked. If I ask you about your legs, don't start telling the Judge about problems with your arms.
6. If you don't know the answer to a question, say you don't know. If you don't remember, say you don't remember.
7. Speak up at your hearing so that you can be heard and understood.
8. If a relative or friend comes with you to the hearing, you should tell them not to answer questions for you when you are testifying. Even if you cannot remember or if you answer incorrectly, they should not interrupt.

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9. Don't try to put on a brave front at your hearing. They're not handing out awards for bravery. If it hurts, testify that it hurts. If you can't do something, testify that you can't do it. You cannot expect a fair decision from the Judge unless he/she knows what is wrong with you. Be honest.
10. Don't exaggerate your problems at your hearing. This can hurt you more than anything. Don't downplay your problems either. Be honest.
11. If you need to stand up or walk around during your hearing, do it. You don't have to ask my permission or the judge's. Just do it. Remember, if you testify that you can only sit 15 minutes at a time and then sit in agony through a 45 minute hearing, the judge will think you are lying. If you are upset and need to leave the room or want a break from the hearing, just ask.
12. Your hearing will be before an Administrative Law Judge who works for Social Security and hears only Social Security cases.
13. Social Security will not be represented at the hearing by a lawyer.
14. There will be no jury or spectators at your hearing. Unless I tell you otherwise, the only people there will be you, me, the judge, the judge's hearing reported, any expert witnesses called such as a vocational or medical expert, and any witnesses such as friends and family you ask to testify. Witnesses generally are not in the hearing room while you testify.
15. The hearing will last from one to three hours.
16. The judge will not announce a decision at the hearing. The decision will be mailed and received generally one to three months after the hearing.
17. Call me when you get the decision.
18. If you have to be admitted to the hospital or some other major development occurs regarding your health while we are waiting for a decision in your case, please let me know as soon as possible.
19. If we win, you will not be paid until from one to three months (and sometimes longer) after we get the decision.
20. **YOU SHOULD CALL ME IF YOU GET ANY CHECKS FROM SOCIAL SECURITY. DO NOT CASH ANY CHECK WITHOUT CONTACTING MY OFFICE FIRST. WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE CORRECT BENEFIT AMOUNT(S).**