

# Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

July 2011



## Objective

Determine the effects of the electronic claims analysis tool (eCAT) in States that use the single decision maker (SDM) model and on decisions made by the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR).

## Background

eCAT is a Web-based application designed to document a disability adjudicator's analysis and ensure all relevant Agency policies are considered during the disability adjudication process.

SDM, which is used in 20 States, allows the disability examiner to make a determination without a mandatory medical consultant (MC) or psychological consultant sign-off on many claims and gives the examiner authority to decide when to involve an MC in complex claims.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO/BEPDF/A-01-11-21193.pdf>

## ***The Effects of the Electronic Claims Analysis Tool*** ***(A-01-11-21193)***

### **Our Findings**

SDMs began processing cases in 1999; however, most SDM sites began using eCAT within the past year, when the Agency began implementing the tool nationally. Additionally, since eCAT is still being rolled out to disability determination services (DDS), relatively few claims processed with eCAT have been appealed and decided at the ODAR level. Therefore, the results of our review are a snapshot of the effects of eCAT in States that used the SDM model and on ODAR decisions during Calendar Year 2010.

Our early snapshot—including a review of 500 sample SDM cases, 500 sample ODAR cases, and input from the Social Security Administration and DDS employees—showed eCAT

- resulted in longer processing for SDM determinations at the DDS level but shorter processing times at the ODAR level;
- promoted the consistent application of policy, and, consequently, could result in allowance rates that are closer to the national average at both the initial and hearings levels;
- had a positive effect on disability examiner training, and reinforced process unification principles; and
- resulted in better documented determinations, and had a positive effect on ODAR work processes.