# The Social Security Administration's Expansion of Health Information Technology
# A-01-13-13027

## Objective

To assess the Social Security Administration's (SSA) expansion of health information technology (health IT).

## Background

SSA's Medical Evidence Gathering and Analysis Through Health IT (MEGAHIT) system automatically obtains electronic records from SSA's partners in minutes.

In our review of *Health Information Technology Provided by Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and MedVirginia* (A-01-11-11117), we determined that SSA's health IT pilots reduced the time it took to receive health records and make disability determinations. During that review, SSA had two health IT partners.

To conduct our current review, we identified 215,176 individuals whose electronic disability folders indicated SSA requested health IT records from July 2011 through May 2014. From this population, we randomly selected 275 cases for detailed analysis. We also requested feedback from five disability determination services (DDS) and met with SSA staff.

## Findings

Despite challenges, SSA continued expanding health IT and partnered with 38 health care organizations, exchanged electronic records in 30 States and the District of Columbia, and identified ways of enhancing health IT case processing and data analytics. In addition, the DDSs reported they were generally satisfied with MEGAHIT; however, some suggested enhancements to the system. Some DDSs also reported MEGAHIT issues that the Agency did not know about, despite SSA previously soliciting DDS user feedback.

Finally, our review of 275 sample cases found (a) that MEGAHIT received electronic health records 19 days faster than traditional records and (b) SSA made disability decisions, on average, 21 days faster, in the 5 cases where only health IT records were requested.

## Recommendations

1. Continue to solicit, on a regular basis, DDS user feedback in MEGAHIT enhancements.

2. Enhance procedures to maintain and update MEGAHIT partner data, such as addresses.

3. Enhance methods to improve the use of information received via Health IT.

4. Increase health IT partners—taking advantage of nation-wide Federal efforts led by Health and Human Services' Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology.

SSA agreed with the recommendations.