Summary

Revised and updated this page to streamline with Acceptable Medical Source (AMS) rule changes to WAC 388-449-0010- What evidence do we consider to determine disability?

Disability Determinations — Acceptable Medical and Other Evidence

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WAC 388-449-0010 What evidence do we consider to determine disability?

WAC 388-449-0015 What medical evidence do I need to provide?
Clarifying Information - WAC 388-449-0010

1. A diagnosis of a **medically determinable** disabling impairment must be from a **"acceptable medical source"** as defined in WAC 388-449-0010. The diagnosis must be supported by means of objective medical evidence described in WAC 388-449-0015 and be based on an examination from a physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist within the last 5 years of the application date.

2. After a diagnosis of a potentially disabling impairment has been established, we can use medical evidence from **"treating medical sources"** as providers (PAC's and ARNP) for current medical evidence.

3. Once we have an impairment established by a doctor's diagnosis and current medical evidence, then we may include **"other evidence"** at our discretion, use documentation of how an impairment limits functioning from other sources. Other sources include, but are not limited to:

4. Chiropractors
5. Physical therapists
6. Naturopaths
7. Therapists
8. Social workers
9. Care-givers
10. Employers
11. Family member

12. Statements regarding how the impairment(s) limit a client's functioning must be consistent with objective medical evidence.

2. When determining if a medically determinable condition exists, we only use primary diagnosis of conditions that will produce potentially disabling symptoms or impairments.

   1. **These symptoms can either** be the direct result of the disease or injury, or as a result of treatment for the condition.

1. Some examples of diagnoses that don’t qualify as a diagnosis of a potentially disabling condition are:

   1. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD);
   2. and other Learning disorders, are not considered disabling conditions for adults by SSA and cannot be used as a disabling condition for ABD;

2. Hypertension is typically asymptomatic and therefore is expected to produce potentially disabling symptoms;

4. Hepatitis;
1. **Hepatitis** is also typically asymptomatic or produces mild symptoms. If the disease has progressed, interferon treatment could result in significant fatigue, but may not meet the duration requirement for disability.

5. Bereavement or grief is not an acceptable diagnosis.

2. While the severity may be temporarily disabling, it is not reasonable to expect the condition to last for 12 months or more.

1. Pain cannot be used as a diagnosis. There must be a medically determinable condition (diagnosis of an injury or disease).

3. Once a diagnosis has been established by an "acceptable medical source," then written evidence from other treating professionals or non-medical sources can be used to determine how the impairment affects the client's ability to function.

**EXAMPLE:** Milly has a diagnosis of degenerative disc disease from a physician. Milly's MRI indicates moderate stenosis. Milly provides a letter from her daughter describing how her mother complains of a tingling sensation in her hands, and that Milly has recently seen her mother dropped objects that weigh more than 10 lbs. Since Milly has a medically determinable impairment that could result in the symptoms described, her daughter's statements can be used to help determine the severity of Milly's impairments and her exertional level.

**EXAMPLE:** Bart states that pain in his knee keeps him from working. The physician who examined Bart found mild edema, but no crepitus, or other abnormal findings, and Bart's gait and station were noted within normal limits (WNL). Bart also provided a statement from a physician's assistant (PA) that he had been previously stated Bart was limited to sedentary work due to knee pain. Since Bart does not have a medically determinable impairment, the statement from the PA can't be used when making a determination of disability.