

2007 Recommendations for Additions to the Bringing America Home Act (BAHA)

– *Access Provisions* –

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

Legislative Recommendations:

1. For purposes of documenting disability in applications for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits, **expand the list of "acceptable medical sources" that can provide medical evidence of impairment** to include Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, Psychiatric Nurses, and Licensed Clinical or Psychiatric Social Workers.
2. Require SSA to develop a policy to identify homeless claimants at the time of application or at the Disability Determination Service level and **require SSA to report aggregate numbers of homeless claimants, rates of approval, and average length of time for final determination for such claimants.**
3. **Require SSA to ensure expedited processing of applications of homeless claimants** through the establishment of homeless claims units or the establishment of additional, designated employee positions in each region.
4. **Add homelessness with diagnosed schizophrenia to the categories of impairments that entitle claimants to six months of presumptive disability benefits** pending determination of eligibility for extended benefits. For schizophrenia to be diagnosed, the illness must have lasted for at least six months and include at least one month of active phase symptoms, including two or more of the following: delusions, hallucinations, disorganized or catatonic behavior, negative symptoms.
5. **Allow homeless claimants to prove their identity using collateral contacts**, as is currently allowed under the Food Stamp Program.