



# Disability Dispatch

Your Source for Social Security News  
from the Law Office of Cathy L. Brackin

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## Don't Let Facebook Derail Your Disability Claim

**S**ocial media such as **Facebook** and **Twitter** have become popular pastimes, especially among the disabled population. Not working leads to isolation, which can be eased by connecting with family and friends online. **Social Security** claimants should be aware that participation in social media can harm their claims.

### What's your profile?

Take a look at your profile. Do your hobbies include active pursuits such as running or water skiing? That may not be consistent with your claim that you cannot even work at a desk job.

Innocent status posts can be misconstrued. Photos showing you doing things you claim you cannot do may be problematic. Never mind that the photo was taken prior to your illness, or that you were bedridden for



a week thereafter. Your credibility is at stake.

Do your "likes" include questionable interests such as "growing cannabis?" This isn't the image you want to present to the Social Security judge.

At the very least, keep access to your postings as "friends only." Most social media platforms default to the

lowest level of privacy, so you need to go into your account settings and change it. Don't accept "friend" requests from people you don't know. Be very careful with what you post and assume that anyone can read it.

### Limit your time there

So far, I have not encountered a case of social media ruining a Social Security claim, but I have heard a few stories from colleagues at a national conference. Judges do often inquire about the amount of time a claimant spends online, wondering whether that person could perform a full-time job working at a computer.

Social media are already used as an investigative tool by insurance companies and in personal injury defense.

It is only a matter of time.

Forewarned is forearmed. ✿

## CASE STUDY: Young Mom Battles Multiple Sclerosis

**T**wenty-four-year-old Megan (name changed to protect privacy) was a hard-working, energetic cook at a steak house. The Cumberland County resident was in good health until she hit her back against the bathtub and soon after began to have weakness and numbness of the legs. Her symptoms worsened over the next two months. She started to feel dizzy and lost her balance, forcing her to stop working. Megan was admitted to the hospital where she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Exhausted and in constant pain, Megan struggled with everyday activities such as caring for her son and doing

light housekeeping.

Megan filed an application for Social Security Disability and was denied. She appealed to the reconsideration level and received another denial.

She came into my office shortly after appealing to the hearing level. I explained that we would have to prove that Megan was unable to perform "sedentary" work. Sedentary work is a job in which one sits for six out of eight hours a day, stands or walks for two hours out of eight, and lifts up to 10 pounds occasionally.

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to stay up-to-date with news you can use regarding Social Security Disability and S.S.I.

## 7 Tips for Managing Your Medications

**T**aking medicine is a way of life for those with disabilities. It is remarkable how many of my clients take a dozen medications or more. I sat down with pharmacist **Nonnie Unkow** of **CVS** in Turnersville and learned these tips for effectively managing multiple medications.

**1 BE ORGANIZED.** Keep your medications all in one place.

**2 KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TAKING** and why. Write on the bottle the reason for the medication.

**3 MAKE A LIST** of your meds, including the doses, and carry it in your wallet. Keep the list up to date; note changes in doses and cross out those you no longer use.

**4 FILL ALL PRESCRIPTIONS** at one pharmacy. Let the pharmacist

know what over-the-counter remedies you're taking, including supplements. Your pharmacy can screen for interactions.

**5 IF COST IS AN ISSUE,** look into 90-day supplies or drug manufacturer discounts. Switch to a generic if your physician agrees as some are not as effective or may cause side effects.

**6 DO NOT CUT PILLS** in half to “stretch” the supply. This can be harmful to your health. Take as directed and ask your doctor if you can be switched to a less expensive alternative.

**7 PURCHASE MEDS** from a reliable source. Buying on the Internet may not be safe. Regulations of foreign countries may not be as strict as in the U.S., and the quality may be inferior. ❁

### **MOM**, continued

I obtained an opinion from her primary care physician as to Megan's limitations in sitting, standing, walking, and lifting. The doctor also said that frequent unscheduled breaks were necessary and side effects of medication include fatigue and foggiess of mind.

We collected statements from family and friends. Megan's mother described how she helps her daughter with childcare, laundry and shopping, and how difficult it is watching Megan “living like a shut-in.” “How many young women do you see routinely going to bed at 7 p.m.?” her mother-in-law asked.

We appeared for a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge. After just several minutes of testimony the judge found Megan to be disabled as of the time she stopped working.

## From the Editor

**I** invite you to view my newly created Social Security Disability video library on my website, [www.njdisabilitylaw.com](http://www.njdisabilitylaw.com). I've put together a collection of answers to the questions most frequently asked by clients. Learn the difference between Social Security Disability and SSI. What is a hearing like? Why do drug addicts and alcoholics get Social Security? Please give me your feedback and suggestions for other questions you'd like to see answered in the future. *C.L.B.*

*Disability Dispatch* is published by the **Law Office of Cathy L. Brackin**. It is not intended to give legal advice. You should consult an attorney for advice regarding your individual situation.

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