

*From the Desk of High Point Village Social Worker, Natalie Hendrix*



## Welcome!

This is the first edition of the High Point Village Social Services newsletter. Each edition of this quarterly newsletter will focus on a different topic relevant to the IDD community. If you ever have questions or comments, you can reach out to Natalie: [nhendrix@highpointvillage.org](mailto:nhendrix@highpointvillage.org)

## Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal program managed by each state's Social Security Administration. SSI provides monthly payments to adults and children with a disability or blindness who have income and resources below specific financial limits.

Disabled individuals are eligible to apply for SSI on or after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. There are certain forms and documents you will need to have ready when you make your interview appointment. Be sure not to book this appointment until after your child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, or else you will have to reapply.

Sometimes, individuals who are eligible for SSI will be denied due to some mistake either in the application or on the part of SSA. You can and should appeal this denial, but must do so within 60 days of the denial or else a re-application will be required. Special disability attorneys can assist with these appeals with no out-of-pocket expense.

With the new year comes much-needed Cost-of-Living increases for SSI. These increases are as follows:

- \$994 Up from \$967 for individuals
- \$1,491 up from \$1,450 for couples
- The asset limit remains the same at \$2,000
- SSDI beneficiaries received a 2.8% increase over their 2025 benefit

## Survivors Retirement and Disability Insurance (SRDI or SSDI)

Did you know? Your adult child could be eligible for additional income from the Social Security Administration if either of their parents is, themselves, retired, disabled, or deceased. This benefit is called SSDI or SRDI and is available if that retired, disabled or deceased parent paid enough work credits into Social Security. The amount that the disabled adult child ("DAC") receives is dependent upon that work history and whether the parent is also currently taking disbursements from Social Security. SRDI could exceed the DAC's monthly SSI income by several hundred dollars, and--thanks to the "Pickle Amendment"--this won't kick them off of Medicaid. In addition, after 24 months of receiving SSDI, the DAC would be automatically enrolled in Medicare.

To learn more, visit [ssa.gov](http://ssa.gov) and tune into the Consolidated Planning Group Youtube channel for helpful webinars.

FOR SSI/SSDI ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.HIGHPOINTVILLAGE.ORG/GOVERNMENT-BENEFITS](http://WWW.HIGHPOINTVILLAGE.ORG/GOVERNMENT-BENEFITS)



## Caregiver Corner: Practical Tips From an IDD Caregiver

*Tim and Dolores Upp*

When Tim retired, the Upp family began the process of applying both for Tim's Social Security benefits, and for SSDI/SRDI for their daughter, Natalie. Natalie has been receiving Medicaid waiver benefits for many years, and they knew they needed to be careful during this process so as not to accidentally lose those benefits. The "Pickle Amendment" protects DACs from being kicked off of Medicaid despite earning more through their SRDI, but here are some things Tim and Dolores advise, so as to avoid mistakes on the part of the SSA:

- Sign up now for YourTexasBenefits to make the process easier: [www.yourtexasbenefits.com](http://www.yourtexasbenefits.com)
- Make sure the SSA representative with whom you work understands the Pickle Amendment and Medicaid benefit protection.
- Have the following documents on hand: guardianship papers, SSI income statements, bank records for the DAC, a calculation of monthly expenses/bills.

Finally, keep in mind that, while your child will keep their Medicaid benefits, applying for SRDI means re-applying for Medicaid, as it will be a different type of Medicaid coverage under SRDI.

### Medicare Advantage Plans

Does your adult child have SRDI, Medicare, and Medicaid? If so, they are eligible for a Special Needs Medicare Advantage Plan. These plans can help fill the gap in insurance benefits provided by Medicare and Medicaid. Humana and United Healthcare are two of the agencies that offer advantage plans specifically for individuals with Special Needs.

<https://www.uhc.com/communityplan/dual-special-needs-plans/eligibility>

<https://www.uhc.com/medicare/medicare-education/special-needs-plans>

### CitiAccess Updates

Citibus's paratransit service is called CitiAccess. This is a helpful service for individuals with varying disabilities who need transportation to appointments, work, and High Point Village! Citibus recently increased their rates for this service in order to remain sustainable. It now costs \$5 per ride to and from High Point Village. While this rate is more than double the previous rate, we have learned from Citibus leaders that rates to similar locations in Lubbock County are \$10 per ride, and an exception was made for trips to / from High Point Village to only cost \$5.

All other rate changes, CitiAccess information and applications can be found at: [www.Citibus.com/services/#citiaccess](http://www.Citibus.com/services/#citiaccess)

*Assistance with navigating the legal and financial world of special needs caregiving can be found at: [consolidatedplanninggroup.com](http://consolidatedplanninggroup.com) and [www.forfamiliesofspecialneeds.com](http://www.forfamiliesofspecialneeds.com)*

### Upcoming Dates:

- Special Olympics Basketball Tournament: 2/7 9am-12pm at Lubbock Cooper Middle School
- Night to Shine: 2/13 6pm-9pm at Southcrest Baptist Church. [www.nighttoshine.org](http://www.nighttoshine.org)
- World Down Syndrome Day: 3/21--Wear your crazy socks!
- High Point Village Respite Night: 3/27 6pm-9pm; Register Online
- Burkhart Center Walk for Autism: 3/29 2pm-4pm at Fuller Track and Field
- April is Autism Awareness Month!
- High Point Village Spring Fling: 4/2 6pm-7:30pm at High Point Village
- Ongoing webinars through Consolidated Planning Group, Advocate Medical Group Down Syndrome Center, and For Families of Special Needs all provide invaluable tools and insight into caring for loved ones with IDD.