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How Does GAF Score Impact Social Security Disability Benefit Approvals?

When an individual with a mental disability applies for [Social Security Disability \(SSDI\) benefits](#), it can be difficult to

assess how that disability affects his or her ability to work. Some of these types of disabilities are [psychological conditions](#) such as depression, anxiety, bi-polar disorder, schizophrenia, autism and other mental disorders.



To help assess an individual's mental health and work capability, the Social Security Administration (SSA) uses a scale called the **Global Assessment of Functioning**, or **GAF**.



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BLOG

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IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 2

California: Biggest, Tallest, Oldest and Largest

PAGE 3

Slow Cooker Pizza Casserole Recipe

PAGE 4

What's Happening in Southern California

GAF Scores

Mental health practitioners use this scale to diagnose, document and offer prognosis on a patient's mental health. The scale runs from 100 to 1 and is grouped by increments of 10: as the number decreases, symptoms and severity of mental health illness increase. **Here are some examples of the groupings:**

- Score of 91 – 100: the individual can function in daily environments and doesn't experience symptoms of anxiety, depression or mood disorders.
- Score of 51 – 60: moderate symptoms are present, as the individual finds it difficult in social situations and experiences difficulty in getting along with others. He may find it hard to express emotions and suffers occasional anxiety or panic attacks.
- Score of 21 – 30: the individual finds it hard to hold a job, has difficulty communicating with others, experiences constant depression and may have delusions or hallucinations.
- Score of 1 – 10: the patient is capable of hurting himself or others.

GAF Scores are Only Part of the Picture

An applicant's GAF score is just one piece of the puzzle in determining [eligibility for SSDI payments](#).

The SSA will also review:

- All medical records from physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists and mental health professionals
- Admissions to hospitals and other mental health facilities
- Medication types, dosages, effectiveness and side effects
- Opinion of treating physician as to work capabilities

Each case must be assessed individually, and since the GAF score may not be precise, all other data and health records must be incorporated into the review to make an accurate determination as to the individual's ability to work.

An [attorney expert in documenting the treating psychiatrist's detailed opinions](#) can help individuals with mental disorders obtain the benefits they have earned.

**California: Biggest,
Tallest, Oldest and
Largest**

It's common knowledge that the highest



peak in the lower 48 states is California's own Mount Whitney at 14,495 feet. But did you know that there are many other “-est”s that can be found only in our own Golden State?

- Move over Texas – the **largest** three-day rodeo in the United States takes place each year in Red Bluff's Tehama County fairgrounds.
- Bad Water in Death Valley is the **lowest** place in the United States at 282 feet below sea level.
- The **tallest** tree in the world, at 369 feet, is in Humboldt Redwoods State Park.
- The **biggest** railroad museum in North America is Sacramento's California State Railroad Museum.
- At nearly three million acres, San Bernardino County is the **largest** in the nation.
- With summer temperatures sometimes reaching more than 115°, Death Valley is the **hottest** and **driest** place in the United States.
- California has the **largest** number of National Parks (eight) in the country.
- California has the **biggest** economy in the U.S. and, ranked against other countries, it comes in seventh.
- Specimens of the **oldest** living species, the bristle cone pine, may be found in Inyo National Forest. Some of these trees are believed to be over 4,600 years old.
- San Francisco is considered to be the world's **largest** landlocked harbor.
- The **biggest** open air auditorium of the world is the Hollywood Bowl.
- The **biggest** surviving tree, with a stem perimeter of 102 feet, is found in

the Sequoia National Park.

If you or a loved one has been denied Worker's Compensation or Social Security Disability (SSDI) benefits, it's important to get an attorney experienced in these types of cases involved immediately. Call **800-438-7734** for your initial free consultation, either in our office or in the comfort of your own home. The Kenton Koszdin Law Office, [Social Security attorney in Van Nuys](#), can help you navigate the application process for the best possible outcome for you and your family.

Recipe of the Month:

Slow Cooker Pizza Casserole Recipe



Inviting a crowd to watch the SuperBowl? Here's a great pasta dish you can make ahead of time in your slow cooker. Enjoy the game with your friends!

Ingredients

- 1 package (16 ounces) rigatoni or large tube pasta
- 1-½ pounds ground turkey
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 16 oz. shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 2 15 oz. cans pizza sauce
- 1 10-¾ oz. can condensed cream of mushroom soup, undiluted

- 8 oz. sliced pepperoni (optional)

Directions:

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a skillet, cook ground turkey and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain.

2. Drain pasta; place in a 5-qt. slow cooker. Stir in the beef mixture, cheese, pizza sauce, soup and pepperoni. Cover and cook on low for 2–3 hours or until heated through. Yield: 12–14 servings.

Recipe courtesy of TasteofHome.com

What's Happening in Southern California in February 2015

Feb. 1, 6, 7, 8, 13 & 14, 2015

Murder on the Nile play
Playhouse Theatres, Long Beach

Feb. 7, 2015

Mermaid Half Marathon, 10K & 5K
SeaWorld Park, San Diego

Feb. 7, 2015

HB Ocean Breeze Run
Huntington Beach bike trail, Huntington
Beach

Feb. 8, 2015

RG Canning Flea market
Rose Bowl, Pasadena

Feb. 14, 2015

Tour de Palm Springs
Spa Resort Casino parking lot F,
Palm Springs

Feb. 15, 2015

Rose Bowl Half Marathon
Rose Bowl, Pasadena

Feb. 19 – 21, 2015

Frank Sinatra Celebrity Invitational
Fantasy Springs Resort Casino,
Palm Desert

Feb. 22, 2015

Bridal showplace Bridal shows

Feb. 10, 2015

Stairway of the Stars CHOIR Night
Concert

Barnum Hall, Santa Monica

Feb. 13 – 22, 2015

Riverside County Fair & National Date
Festival

Riverside County Fairgrounds, Palm
Desert

Knott's Berry Farm Resort Hotel,
Buena Park

Feb. 28 – Mar. 1, 2015

Comic Expo

Long Beach Convention Center



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