

# Notes and Brief Reports

## Characteristics of Applicants for Childhood Disability Benefits, 1957\*

Child's benefits have been paid to children under age 18 ever since monthly old-age and survivors insurance benefits were first payable, in January 1940. To be eligible for benefits, the children must be dependents of workers who died insured under the program, who are receiving old-age benefits as retired workers, or (beginning September 1, 1958) who are entitled to disability benefits. For November 1958, 1.6 million children under age 18 were paid benefits totaling \$62.3 million. Eighty-seven percent (1.4 million) were the survivors of deceased workers, and 13 percent (almost 200,000) were the children of living workers.

The 1956 amendments to the Social Security Act broadened the protection provided to dependents under the program so that benefits also may be paid to the seriously disabled children, aged 18 and over, of retired or deceased insured workers. These disabled individuals must meet the same dependency requirements as those specified for child beneficiaries under age 18. In addition, they must have a disability resulting from a medically determinable physical or mental impairment that began before age 18, has continued without interruption since that time, and is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration. The disability must be of such severity that the applicant is prevented from engaging in any substantial gainful activity. To be awarded childhood disability benefits the applicant must be unmarried, but he may continue to receive benefits if, after becoming entitled, he marries a person receiving benefits under the old-age, survivors, and disability insurance program.

Child's benefits based on disability were first payable for January 1957. During 1957 a total of 41,140 applications for these benefits were proc-

essed, and 36,267 persons were found to meet the disability requirements specified in the law. At the end of the year, 28,869 persons were receiving childhood disability benefits at a monthly rate of \$1.1 million. By the end of November 1958, the number of beneficiaries had increased to 46,990 and the monthly rate to \$1.9 million. The analysis that follows is based on data covering the 36,267 applicants

who met the disability requirements in 1957 and the 4,873 who were found not to meet those requirements.

Persons meeting the disability requirements for childhood disability benefits cannot be expected to be similar in their characteristics to any other group of disabled persons in the general population. They will have had little or no work experience, and they must have disabilities of long duration, dating from childhood and, for the most part, extending far into adulthood. In addition, they must

Table 1.—Childhood disability allowances, 1957: Number and percentage distribution by diagnostic group, primary diagnosis, and sex

Diagnostic group and primary diagnosis	International Code	Number			Percentage distribution		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total.....		36,267	16,938	19,329	100.0	100.0	100.0
Infective and parasitic diseases.....	001-138	1,542	650	892	4.3	3.8	4.6
Late effects of acute poliomyelitis.....	081	906	344	562	2.5	2.0	2.9
Late effects of acute infectious encephalitis.....	083	369	196	173	1.0	1.2	.9
Other.....		267	110	157	.7	.7	.8
Neoplasms.....	140-239	85	33	52	.2	.2	.3
Allergic, endocrine system, metabolic, and nutritional diseases.....	240-289	974	311	663	2.7	1.8	3.4
Myxoedema and cretinism.....	253	748	220	528	2.1	1.3	2.7
Other.....		226	91	135	.6	.5	.7
Diseases of the blood and blood-forming organs.....	290-299	32	24	8	.1	.1	( <sup>1</sup> )
Mental, psychoneurotic, and personality disorders.....	300-328	17,174	8,044	9,130	47.4	47.5	47.2
Mental deficiency.....	325	16,332	7,619	8,713	45.0	45.0	45.1
Schizophrenic disorders (dementia praecox).....	300	562	283	279	1.5	1.7	1.4
Other.....		230	142	138	.8	.8	.7
Diseases of the nervous system and sense organs.....	330-398	14,072	6,797	7,275	38.8	40.1	37.6
Cerebral spastic infantile paralysis with mental deficiency <sup>2</sup> .....	349	5,338	2,706	2,632	14.7	16.0	13.6
Cerebral spastic infantile paralysis.....	351	3,041	1,520	1,521	8.4	9.0	7.9
Epilepsy with mental deficiency <sup>2</sup> .....	359	2,394	1,095	1,299	6.6	6.5	6.7
Late effects of intracranial abscess or pyogenic infection.....	344	1,087	488	599	3.0	2.9	3.1
Epilepsy.....	353	881	365	516	2.4	2.2	2.7
Other.....		1,331	623	708	3.7	3.6	3.6
Diseases of the circulatory system.....	400-468	128	33	95	.4	.2	.5
Diseases of the respiratory system.....	470-528	37	16	21	.1	.1	.1
Diseases of the digestive system.....	530-587	11	5	6	( <sup>1</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )
Diseases of the genito-urinary system.....	590-637	12	2	10	( <sup>1</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )	.1
Diseases of the skin and cellular tissue.....	690-716	12	3	9	( <sup>1</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )
Diseases of the bones and organs of movement.....	720-749	895	431	464	2.5	2.5	2.4
Muscular dystrophy and other diseases of muscle, tendon, and fascia.....	744	349	230	119	1.0	1.4	.6
Rheumatoid arthritis and allied conditions.....	722	312	105	207	.9	.6	1.1
Other.....		234	96	138	.6	.6	.7
Congenital malformations.....	750-759	1,291	587	704	3.6	3.5	3.6
Congenital hydrocephalus.....	752	384	217	167	1.1	1.3	.9
Congenital cataract and other congenital malformations of nervous system and sense organs.....	753	314	139	175	.9	.8	.9
Congenital malformations of bone and joint.....	758	210	80	130	.6	.5	.7
Spina bifida and meningocele.....	751	173	60	113	.5	.4	.6
Other.....		210	91	119	.6	.5	.6
Other <sup>3</sup> .....		2	2	0	( <sup>1</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )	.0

\* Prepared by Phoebe H. Goff, Division of Program Analysis, Bureau of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance.

<sup>1</sup> Less than 0.05 percent.

<sup>2</sup> Special modification of the International Code.

<sup>3</sup> Diagnoses not included in diagnostic groups shown above.

meet specific requirements as to the severity of the disability. To be eligible for benefits they must also meet qualifications concerning age and dependency on an entitled parent or on one who died insured under the act. Persons who met the disability requirements for childhood disability benefits in 1957 also probably differed in some characteristics from those who met these requirements subsequently. The 1958 amendments liberalized the dependency requirements to allow more children who were institutionalized and more who were recipients of public assistance to qualify on the wage record of a parent. They also made possible the payment of benefits to dependents (including disabled children) of disability insurance beneficiaries.

### Diagnosis

Permanent and serious impairments among the 36,267 persons who met the disability requirements for childhood disability benefits were produced by a wide range of physical and mental conditions that affect children (table 1). More than three-fourths had conditions that are presumed to be generally of prenatal origin or to have occurred at or soon after birth. For about two-thirds, mental deficiency was one of the factors in the primary diagnosis, and for 45 percent it was the primary diagnosis. In 23 percent of the cases, cerebral spastic infantile paralysis appeared as the primary diagnosis, but for 3 out of 5 of them the cerebral palsy was accompanied by mental deficiency. Among the 9.0 percent whose disability was the result of epilepsy, 2 out of 3 were also mentally deficient. An additional 2.1 percent had a primary diagnosis of myxoedema and cretinism, conditions frequently associated with less-than-normal mental capacity.

In 4.3 percent of the 36,267 individuals the disability was due primarily to the residual effects of parasitic and infectious diseases such as acute poliomyelitis and acute encephalitis. In 3.6 percent the disability resulted from a congenital malformation.

For most of the 4,873 applicants who, it was determined, did not meet the disability qualifications for childhood benefits, the medical evidence

was sufficient to establish the presence of some abnormal physical or mental condition. The majority (3,280) were not sufficiently disabled to meet the medical requirements necessary to qualify. There were 828 who could not meet the requirement that the disabling condition begin before age 18.

The diagnoses for most of these persons indicated the presence of conditions that could affect the need for vocational adjustment. Applicants unable to qualify for childhood disability benefits, as well as those who do qualify, are referred to State vocational rehabilitation agencies for an assessment of their potentialities for rehabilitation and for service that can help restore them to gainful activity.

Of the group who did not meet the disability requirements, 28 percent were found to have mental, psychoneurotic, and personality disorders, and 27 percent had diseases of the nervous system and sense organs. Conditions resulting from infectious and parasitic diseases were found in

9.2 percent, and diseases of the bones and organs of movement in 6.9 percent.

### Sex and Age at Application

Persons who are eligible for childhood disability benefits are, in fact, adults; none can be under age 18 and most are over age 21. Of the 36,267 whose disabilities met the statutory requirements in 1957, 4,900 or 14 percent were aged 45 or over (table 2). These disabled persons were, however, considerably younger than the general population aged 18 and over; their median age was 34.1, compared with 42.3 years for all persons aged 18 and over.

The disabled women whose applications were allowed were, on the average, 2 years older than the disabled men; their median age was 35.1, in comparison with 33 for the men. In the general population the corresponding difference was less than 1 year. Except in the younger ages, women outnumbered men, and the proportion of women increased in

Table 2.—Childhood disability allowances, 1957: Number and percentage distribution by age and sex

Age group <sup>1</sup>	Number			Female, as percent of total	Percentage distribution		
	Total	Male	Female		Total	Male	Female
Total.....	36,267	16,938	19,329	53.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
18-24.....	7,748	4,074	3,674	47.4	21.4	24.1	19.0
25-29.....	5,373	2,715	2,658	49.5	14.8	16.0	13.8
30-34.....	6,041	2,779	3,262	54.0	16.7	16.4	16.9
35-39.....	6,708	3,036	3,672	54.7	18.5	17.9	19.0
40-44.....	5,497	2,378	3,119	56.7	15.2	14.0	16.1
45-49.....	3,033	1,216	1,817	59.9	8.4	7.2	9.4
50 and over.....	1,867	740	1,127	60.4	5.1	4.4	5.8
Median age.....	34.1	33.0	35.1				

<sup>1</sup> Age on birthday in year application was filed.

Table 3.—Childhood disability denials, 1957: Number and percentage distribution by age and sex

Age group <sup>1</sup>	Number			Female, as percent of total	Percentage distribution		
	Total	Male	Female		Total	Male	Female
Total.....	4,873	2,264	2,609	53.5	100.0	100.0	100.0
18-24.....	1,398	785	613	43.8	28.7	34.7	23.5
25-29.....	517	257	260	50.3	10.6	11.4	10.0
30-34.....	631	291	340	53.9	12.9	12.9	13.0
35-39.....	803	369	434	54.0	16.5	16.3	16.6
40-44.....	734	283	451	61.4	15.1	12.5	17.3
45-49.....	431	154	277	64.3	8.8	6.8	10.6
50 and over.....	359	125	234	64.2	7.4	5.5	9.0
Median age.....	34.1	31.5	36.1				

<sup>1</sup> Age on birthday in year application was filed.

each succeeding age group. Women made up 56 percent, for example, of the age group 35-44 and 60 percent of the group aged 45 and over.

Of the 4,873 persons who did not meet the disability requirements, women formed 54 percent; of those aged 45 and over, they made up 65 percent (table 3). In this group the women were 4½ years older, on the average, than the men, and they outnumbered them at all ages except 18-24. The proportion of women increased in each successive age group both among those who met the disability requirements and among those who did not.

### **Mobility Status**

Referral of the disabled applicant to a State vocational rehabilitation agency for assessment of his potentialities for rehabilitation and for restorative services is an important aspect of the old-age, survivors, and disability insurance program. The severity of the disability and the extent to which the handicapped person must depend, in his activities of daily living, on the help of family members and others indicate the challenge presented to rehabilitative skills and resources.

The impairments of the 36,267 persons who qualified for disability benefits were such that only 38 percent were ambulatory outside the home without the help of others. Fifty-two percent were either housebound or unable to leave the home without assistance. Ten percent were in institutions.

Older persons in this group were less likely than younger ones to be institutionalized, and they were more likely to be housebound or to require assistance in leaving the home. Persons aged 45 and older composed 14 percent of the total but only 7.6 percent of those institutionalized. The group aged 18-24 made up 21 percent of all the disabled who were awarded benefits and 40 percent of those who were institutionalized.

As was to be expected, persons who did not meet the disability requirements were less likely than those who did to be severely limited with respect to independence of movement. The majority (73 percent) were ambulatory outside their homes without the

help of others, and only 5.6 percent were institutionalized.

## **Temporary Unemployment Compensation and General Assistance, June-December 1958\***

The Temporary Unemployment Compensation Act of 1958 (Public Law 85-441) was signed by the President on June 4, 1958, and became effective on June 19. This note summarizes the Federal-State temporary unemployment compensation programs and attempts to assess their impact on the general assistance program, which is the public assistance program usually most sensitive to economic conditions.

### **Temporary Unemployment Compensation Programs**

The 1958 law provided additional benefits to unemployed workers who had exhausted their rights to benefits under the regular State unemployment insurance programs. The additional benefits were payable for weeks of unemployment beginning after June 19, 1958, or after the date the State signed an agreement to pay the benefits and before April 1, 1959. On March 31, 1959, the President signed into law an extension of the program through June 30, 1959.

Altogether, 17 States<sup>1</sup> agreed to participate in the Federal program for the payment of extended benefits to three groups—workers covered under the State unemployment insurance laws, Federal employees, and veterans. In addition, five States<sup>2</sup> extended benefits under their own laws to the first two groups of workers; they participated in the Federal program only with respect to claimants exhausting benefit rights under the program of unemployment compensation for veterans.

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<sup>1</sup> Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and West Virginia.

<sup>2</sup> Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Fourteen States<sup>3</sup> participated in the Federal program on a limited basis. Extended benefits were available in these States only to unemployed Federal employees and veterans, who together account for about 2 percent of all unemployment insurance beneficiaries under State-administered programs.

In terms of coverage, about 70 percent of all persons covered by State unemployment insurance programs as of December 31, 1957, were employed in the 22 States that had accepted the Federal program for the three groups of unemployed persons or that had extended benefits under their own laws to the three groups. These States also had about 70 percent of all insured unemployed workers who exhausted their benefit rights under State programs during the second quarter of 1958.

Benefits under the Temporary Unemployment Compensation Act could not be paid for longer than half the duration of the individual claimant's benefits under the regular State program, and they were payable at his weekly rate under the regular program. Of the States with their own temporary unemployment compensation laws, all but Colorado followed this pattern; Colorado extended the duration of benefits by 25 percent instead of 50 percent.

The potential duration of benefits under the regular unemployment insurance programs and the temporary programs in the States that extended benefits to the three groups of insured unemployed persons is shown in table 1. In Pennsylvania, for example, insured persons could receive unemployment benefits—if needed—for 45 weeks (30 weeks of regular benefits and 15 weeks of temporary benefits); at the other extreme, some unemployed workers in Indiana could receive benefits for as few as 9 weeks (6 weeks of regular benefits and 3 weeks under the temporary program).

Data are not available on the average number of weeks of benefits received by persons who drew temporary unemployment compensation

<sup>3</sup> Arizona, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Kentucky, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas, the Virgin Islands, and Washington.