

Internal controls fail to prevent Social Security overpayments

Recipients of Social Security Disability Insurance have probably been following the news closely since it was announced that the SSDI trust fund will likely go broke by late 2016. In a recent development, brought on by the government attempting to keep SSD benefits funded, it has come to light that \$371.5 million in overpayments have been made by the Social Security Administration between 2009 and 2013.

The overpayments occurred when concurrent payments from the Federal Employees' Compensation Act payments and the SSDI payments were made. Around 1,040 individuals received concurrent payments for at least one month that weren't noticed.

The overpayments came to light when the Government Accountability Office conducted a study that was meant to test the SSA's internal controls. In the review, 20 recipients were randomly selected. In every one of those cases, the SSA controls didn't detect overpayments or stop them. Out of those, seven received overpayments for over a decade.

With the news that SSDI is going broke, it is vital that overpayments stop. Part of the issue is that beneficiaries are asked to report overpayments. There aren't any system prompts that would lead the SSA staff members to ask about other payments.

This news doesn't mean that people who need to rely on SSDI shouldn't apply. Instead, it only highlights how the actions of some untruthful beneficiaries might affect others down the road.

Anyone who needs to seek out Social Security benefits should make sure he or she understands the requirements prior to applying. Working with someone familiar with the process of applying and appealing can help to make the process smoother.