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ELDER LAW MINUTE

Did you know that in addition to proving financial need, an applicant for Medicaid also must meet several *Basic Eligibility Criteria*. For example, the applicant must be either aged, blind or disabled. Most nursing home applicants fall into the aged category. In order to prove that you are aged, you must either have a birth certificate, baptismal record, Social Security record or State issued ID or Drivers License proving that you are at least 65 years of age.

The Medicaid applicant is required to apply for all other monetary benefits to which he may be entitled. This includes pensions, Veteran's Benefits, disability benefits, annuities and inheritances. However, the applicant is not required to apply for Year's Support, which is a way for a widowed spouse to receive benefits from their spouse's estate in addition to any inheritance left under the Will.

The Medicaid applicant must either be a U.S. citizen or a lawfully admitted qualified alien. For most applicants, their U.S. birth certificate proves their citizenship. If the applicant was not born in the U.S., then a U.S. passport, Certificate of Naturalization or Certificate of Citizenship are the best proof of citizenship.

The Medicaid applicant must have a Social Security number. Some married people receive their Social Security and Medicare benefits under their spouse's Social Security number with a B or a D at the end of it. This is called their claim number. It is not the applicant's Social Security number. The applicant must be able to produce proof of his own Social Security number.

The applicant must be a resident of Georgia. This means that he or she must live or intend to live in Georgia for the indefinite future. The applicant may not be in Georgia just for a visit. There is no minimum durational requirement so a person who moves to Georgia with the intent to stay is eligible as soon as he gets here.

The applicant must provide Medicaid with information about any other resources available to help pay his medical expenses such as Long-Term Care insurance, health insurance or a trust and must assign the benefits to Medicaid.