

Medford, MA 02155. The financing is contemplated for funding growth.

The financing is brought within the purview of section 107.730(a)(1) of the Regulations because Zero Stage Capital V, L.P., as Associate of Zero Stage Capital VI, L.P., owns greater than 10 percent of Kinetix Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and therefore Kinetix Pharmaceuticals, Inc. is considered an Associate of Zero Stage Capital VI, L.P. as defined in Section 107.50 of the Regulations.

Notice is hereby given that any interested person may, not later than April 29, 1999, submit written comments on the proposed transaction to the Associate Administrator for Investment, U.S. Small Business Administration, 409 Third Street, SW, Washington, DC 20416.

A copy of this Notice shall be published, in accordance with section 107.830(g), in the **Federal Register** by SBA.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 59.11, Small Business Investment Companies)

Dated: April 14, 1999.

**Don A. Christensen,**

*Associate Administrator for Investment.*

[FR Doc. 99-9269 Filed 4-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8025-01-P

## SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

### Interest Rates

The Small Business Administration publishes an interest rate called the optional "peg" rate (13 CFR 120.214) on a quarterly basis. This rate is a weighted average cost of money to the government for maturities similar to the average SBA direct loan. This rate may be used as a base rate for guaranteed fluctuating interest rate SBA loans. This rate will be 5 percent for the April-June quarter of FY 99.

**Arnold S. Rosenthal,**

*Acting Deputy Associate Administrator for Financial Assistance.*

[FR Doc. 99-9267 Filed 4-13-99; 8:45 am]

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## SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

### Pioneer Ventures Limited Partnership (License No. 01/01-0337); Notice of Surrender of License

Notice is hereby given that Pioneer Ventures Limited Partnership, 60 State Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02109, has surrendered its license to operate as a small business investment company under the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, as amended (the Act).

Pioneer Ventures Limited Partnership was licensed by the Small Business Administration on November 20, 1986.

Under the authority vested by the Act and pursuant to the Regulations promulgated thereunder, the surrender was accepted on this date, and accordingly, all rights, privileges, and franchises derived therefrom have been terminated.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Programs No. 59.011, Small Business Investment Companies)

Dated: April 7, 1999.

**Don A. Christensen,**

*Associate Administrator for Investment.*

[FR Doc. 99-9266 Filed 4-13-99; 8:45 am]

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## SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

### Social Security Ruling, SSR 99-1p. Title II: Termination of Entitlement Based on Presumed Death

**AGENCY:** Social Security Administration.

**ACTION:** Notice of Social Security Ruling.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with 20 CFR 402.35(b)(1), the Commissioner of Social Security gives notice of Social Security Ruling, SSR 99-1p. This Ruling explains that the Social Security Administration (SSA) will terminate entitlement for those beneficiaries whose benefits have remained in suspension for at least 7 years because the beneficiary's whereabouts are unknown. Presumption of death is widely accepted in State and Federal courts and is codified in SSA's regulations. SSA uses this regulatory presumption to establish the fact of death for entitlement purposes and will use it to determine that entitlement ends. Publication of this Ruling will prevent benefits from remaining in suspension indefinitely, thereby reducing the possibility of fraudulent payment of suspended benefits and assuring the continued integrity of SSA's records.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** April 14, 1999.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Jeanne O'Connor, Office of Program Benefits, Social Security Administration, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235-6401, (410) 965-7963.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Although we are not required to do so pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(1) and (a)(2), we are publishing this Social Security Ruling in accordance with 20 CFR 402.35(b)(1).

Social Security Rulings make available to the public precedential decisions relating to the Federal old-age,

survivors, disability, supplemental security income, and black lung benefits programs. Social Security Rulings may be based on case decisions made at all administrative levels of adjudication, Federal court decisions, Commissioner's decisions, opinions of the Office of the General Counsel, and policy interpretations of the law and regulations.

Although Social Security Rulings do not have the same force and effect as the statute or regulations, they are binding on all components of the Social Security Administration, in accordance with 20 CFR 402.35(b)(1), and are to be relied upon as precedents in adjudicating cases.

If this Social Security Ruling is later superseded, modified, or rescinded, we will publish a notice in the **Federal Register** to that effect.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, Programs 96.002 Social Security—Retirement Insurance; 96.003 Social Security—Special Benefits for Persons Aged 72 and Over; 96.004 Social Security—Survivors Insurance.)

Dated: December 1, 1998.

**Kenneth S. Apfel,**

*Commissioner of Social Security.*

### Policy Interpretation Ruling; Title II: Termination of Entitlement Based on Presumed Death

#### Purpose

This Policy Interpretation Ruling explains the Social Security Administration's (SSA) planned use of an established policy for presuming a person dead, after the person has been absent from his or her residence and has not been heard from for a period of 7 years, to terminate entitlement for such individuals. The presumption of death, founded on common law, is widely accepted in State and Federal courts to determine entitlement to property and is codified in our regulations. We use this regulatory presumption to establish the fact of death for entitlement purposes, and will also use it to determine that entitlement ends.

#### Citations (Authority)

Sections 205(a) and 702(a) of the Social Security Act; 20 CFR, sections 404.705 and 404.721.

#### Pertinent History

Currently, SSA suspends benefits to beneficiaries reported missing when notified by a first party reporter, that is, a relative, representative or another beneficiary on the record who establishes that he/she is an acceptable reporter.

In addition, benefits can be suspended if mail is returned because it

is undeliverable. Suspensions of this type follow prescribed development to locate the individual. In such cases, SSA first makes a reasonable effort to locate the beneficiary and then sends a notice to the beneficiary's last known address advising him or her that benefits will be stopped if he or she does not respond within 15 days. If these efforts fail, and there is no response from the beneficiary, benefits are suspended.

In situations where benefits are suspended for whereabouts unknown, unless the presumption of death after 7 years is used to terminate benefits, the benefits can remain in suspension indefinitely. Studies by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) indicate that suspensions should be resolved as a deterrent to fraudulent payment to the wrong individuals. In addition, studies by SSA show that suspensions for lack of address are usually resolved within 24 months, and that benefits left in suspense for longer than 24 months, because the continuing eligibility of the beneficiary cannot be determined, are rarely ever resolved. SSA now has the capability to indicate the reason for suspension on its payment records. Where that reason is whereabouts unknown and benefits are in continuous suspense for at least 7 years, SSA will assume that the reason the beneficiary failed to request payment during that 7 year period is death.

Terminating entitlement for presumed death ensures that suspended payments will not be fraudulently issued to someone other than the beneficiary. That is because erroneous terminations for death can be reinstated only after a face-to-face interview with the beneficiary. However, payment of suspended benefits does not involve the same stringent development before release of payment and is more vulnerable to fraud. By applying the presumption of death policy to terminate entitlement, SSA will ensure that a final resolution to suspension occurs for those cases which otherwise would remain in suspension indefinitely.

Following continuous suspension for 7 years based on whereabouts unknown, entitlement will be terminated for presumed death. Absent evidence to the contrary, death will be presumed to have occurred on the date of disappearance, the date ending the 7 year period, or some other date depending upon what the evidence shows is the most likely date of death.

#### *Policy Interpretation*

SSA will presume that a beneficiary has died and will terminate entitlement

after the individual's payments have been suspended continuously for 7 years or more because the individual's whereabouts are unknown. This policy interpretation will apply to all individuals whose entitlement is not based on disability. The policies for terminating entitlement for disabled beneficiaries whose whereabouts are unknown are addressed in 20 CFR 404.1594. This policy interpretation on presumed death termination, however, will apply to those individuals who have been converted to retirement benefits following an established period of disability. If the benefits are suspended for whereabouts unknown based on a reported disappearance by a first party reporter, that is, a relative, another beneficiary on the record, or a representative of the beneficiary who is an acceptable reporter, the date of presumed death generally will be the date of disappearance, barring some convincing evidence that establishes a more likely date of death.

For cases where suspension for whereabouts unknown originated through undeliverable mail, and benefits have remained in suspension for a period of 7 years or more, the date of presumed death will be the date SSA determined that the individual disappeared, barring some evidence to the contrary.

**Effective Date:** This Ruling is effective upon publication in the **Federal Register**.

#### *Cross-References*

Program Operations Manual System, sections GN 02605.055 and GN 00304.050.

[FR Doc. 99-9226 Filed 4-13-99; 8:45 am]

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## **OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE**

### **Request for Public Comment Regarding Negotiations on Market Access and Other Issues in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Under the Free Trade Area of the Americas**

**AGENCY:** Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).

**ACTION:** Request for comments and notice of public hearings.

**SUMMARY:** The interagency Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) will convene public hearings and seeks additional public comment as part of its efforts to develop proposals and positions concerning the agenda of the third Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), including

articles that may be the subject of market access negotiations. A request was made in March 1999 to the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) to consider various scenarios for the modification, reduction and or elimination of duties on all articles in the Harmonized System Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS), in the context of WTO or FTAA negotiations. This is the second invitation by the TPSC seeking public comment with respect to the development of the agenda, scope, content and timetables for negotiations or further work in the WTO, including additional consultations with non-governmental stakeholders. The Administration seeks views on the broadest possible range of issues for consideration, including possible subject matter and approaches to any new negotiations or future work in the WTO. The WTO General Council has been instructed to prepare recommendations regarding the launch of further trade negotiations and work in the WTO, which will be considered and approved by WTO Members meeting at their next Ministerial to be held in the United States during the fourth quarter of 1999. The TPSC request for public comments and convocation of public hearings regarding the FTAA negotiations will be issued at a later date.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For procedural questions concerning public comments and/or public hearings contact Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, Office of the United States Trade Representative at (202) 395-3475. All other questions concerning the WTO negotiations should be addressed to the agency's Office of WTO and Multilateral Affairs at (202) 395-6843; questions concerning the FTAA negotiations should be addressed to the agency's Office of Western Hemisphere Affairs at (202) 395-6135.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **1. Background**

##### *A. WTO Negotiations*

On May 18-20, 1998, the World Trade Organization (WTO) held its second ministerial conference in Geneva, Switzerland, along with a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the post-World War II multilateral trading system. President Clinton, and a number of heads of state or government addressed the gathering, and WTO Members accepted the U.S. invitation to host the third ministerial conference in late 1999. That meeting will be held in Seattle on November 30-December 3, 1999.